

NEW ^{6 CENTS} BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY

No. 345
APRIL 19, 1919

Devoted to Far West Life

BUFFALO BILL'S BOLD WORK

J. H. BOECKMANN,
341 Central Avenue
STATIONERY
CANDY and TOYS.



STREET & SMITH CORPORATION
PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

NEW BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY

Devoted To  Far West Life

Issued Weekly. Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 Seventh Ave., New York.
Copyright, 1919, by STREET & SMITH CORPORATION.

Terms to NEW BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY Mail Subscribers.

Postage free for United States, Island Possessions, Mexico and Shanghai, China.
Foreign Postage, \$1.00 a year; Canadian Postage 50 cents a year.

Single Copies or Back Numbers, 6c. Each.

3 months.....75c.	6 months.....\$1.50	2 copies one year-\$5.00
4 months.....\$1.00	One year.....3.00	1 copy two years..5.00

How to Send Money—By post-office or express money order, registered letter, bank check or draft, at our risk. At your own risk if sent by currency, coin, or postage stamps in ordinary letter.

Receipts—Receipt of your remittance is acknowledged by proper change of number on your label. If not correct you have not been properly credited, and should let us know at once.

No. 345.

NEW YORK, April 19, 1919.

Price Six Cents.

BUFFALO BILL'S BOLD WORK; OR,

PAWNEE BILL AND THE RIVER ROVERS.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

CHAPTER I.

ON THE "MUDDY MISSOURI."

A wheezy, ramshackly river steamer was clinging like a drowning rat to the pier at Bismarck, Dakota, on the muddiest, wildest river in the world—the Missouri.

The season was spring, and the soft air and sunshine were pleasant to be out in, if one were not obliged to go from one place to another.

But the snow and ice clung to the distant mountains where the great river and its tributaries found their sources, and there was water everywhere.

Passengers, crew, and stores were going on board the old steamer, and one might easily believe that they would never get off the thing alive.

To expect that the steamer, which had been condemned as unsafe a thousand miles below that point, where human lives were of some little account, would ever make any headway against the rushing, turbid flood that swirled and tumbled past at a seven-mile-an-hour clip, implied a childlike faith in the power of steam and cracked boilers that it was hard to understand.

The boat had an odd name. It was called *The Swan*, although its color and style were more suitable to the title of *The Crow*.

Among the passengers—if the boat ever actually got under way—was a party under the leadership and guardianship of Colonel William F. Cody—Buffalo Bill.

The party consisted of seven men, including the scout. There were two Ree Indian scouts, a half-breed volunteer picked up at Bismarck, with Major Gordon Lillie, Pawnee Bill; Philip Ross, a sturdy young man from the East who needs no introduction to the reader, and Mr. Hallam, a restless gold hunter of excellent character, and unvarying courage.

This little band, all of whom had done great work in fighting the warlike Sioux, Buffalo Bill had named his River Rovers.

The expedition was to go up the river to a somewhat

indefinite point betwixt Bismarck and Fort Buford, where a small company of soldiers were besieged by a strong party of redskins under Red Cloud.

Such, in brief, was the mission of Buffalo Bill and the River Rovers.

But the steamer was to carry other passengers, and among them were a young soldier and his wife, the latter having determined to face the perils of the expedition for the sake of being with her husband, who belonged to the garrison then stationed at Fort Buford.

One other member of the party belonged really to the Rovers, girl though she was.

This was Bertha Hallam, the niece and adopted daughter of Mr. Hallam. She had adopted a special costume consisting of a short skirt, tunic, and leggings, adapted to the wild life which was before them. She was as well armed as were any of Cody's party, and she knew how to use the light rifle which she carried. Her beauty and dignity, with the feminine dependence of the soldier's bride, had the good effect of somewhat toning down the roughness of the language and behavior of the crowd.

It was known that Miss Bertha was the friend and protégée of Buffalo Bill, and her own deportment commanded respect.

The bride was an Eastern girl, and had been delicately reared. Both of the young women bore themselves like the ladies which they were, and their presence as members of the perilous expedition was to have another good effect.

The men were nearly all so hardened to a life of peril that they were more or less reckless, and would have taken greater risks in running the gantlet of danger which they knew was before them. But the knowledge that the young women were dependent upon them for protection, and that the consequences to them of captivity among the savages were the greatest, caused the men to feel the heavier responsibility resting upon them.

It was still quite early in the day when it became noised about among the passengers that the last of the stores

for the voyage were stowed away in the capacious hold of the steamer.

The captain of the craft was a short man, built "square" all the way up from his feet. His size was the same about his waist as it was around his shoulders and hips. His face was square, his jaw prominent, and his eyes narrow like the head of a screw.

Captain Clews, of *The Swan*, had perfect confidence in the running qualities of his boat, and he endeavored to make his passengers share his confidence by telling them, in a determined sort of way, about the previous record of *The Swan*.

His crew was barely large enough to take care of the boat, and they were a hard-looking set. Under a weak-willed man they might have been expected to run the craft into the first mud bank, hold up the passengers, and clean them out, and skip with the booty.

But under Captain Clews they were sure not to attempt anything of the kind. He had a crew of that stamp once that did try to run things to suit themselves, and, inside of two minutes after they set out on the scheme, he had every mother's son of them lined up in front of him on their knees, and begging for their lives.

Captain Clews came stamping out to the plank, where the last of the barrows had clattered back onto the pier.

"About ready to start, Captain Clews?" ventured Mr. Hallam, who was standing near.

"Huh!" he snapped, and that was all. For he had never been known to reply to a civil question that had anything to do with his business of starting or stopping the boat. But the answer came in another manner a moment later.

The steamer had to be lashed to the shore as firmly as if it were to stay there forever, else the swirling current of the river would have swept it from its moorings.

Now the lines were cast off. This was done in a hurry, and the boat's wheel—it was an end-wheeler—began to dig into the muddy flood that swept by.

The soldier's bride caught the arm of her husband in a frightened grip as the steamer began to gasp, shiver, and splash, while the terrible power of the river swept her down with the current like a stick of driftwood, despite all the efforts at steering and propelling.

Then Captain Clews began yelling his orders and swearing in tones which were like those of a foghorn. A perfect babel of noises reigned. In spite of everything it looked as if the steamer must fail to get a grip of its own, and that it must inevitably be swept on with the relentless current.

The terror of the bride increased, but she did not scream. She seemed to be resigning herself to the fate which it seemed certain all those who had intrusted themselves to the crazy craft must share.

Bertha Hallam was made of different stuff; at least, her training had hardened her to the pinch of peril, for she calmly watched the erratic struggles of the steamer, and laughed when, getting too near the wheel, a dash of the muddy spray struck her in the face.

Philip Ross stood near and observed all that was doing in a sort of moody silence. He did not seem to be anxious about the safety of the boat. He watched the soldier and his bride a little enviously, for he would have been glad if a certain other young lady would exhibit just a touch of fear, so that he might feel warranted in protecting her with his arm, as the soldier was doing with his pretty bride.

But Bertha, possibly understanding his sentiments, did not give him any excuse. The more the steamer swayed and plunged in the boiling flood, the more her cracked boilers hissed with leaking steam, the more the wheel lashed the angry river into a brown foam, the better she seemed to enjoy it.

But Captain Clews and his pilot knew what they were about, and in spite of all predictions to the contrary, they got *The Swan* steadied, with her nose pointing upstream at last, and she began to make some headway against the current.

"We'll beat the old Missouri after all, I reckon!" said Buffalo Bill, approaching Ross.

"It looked rather doubtful at the start," was the reply.

"If the boilers only don't blow up, we'll get to our

destination and have a show for another kind of fight. But, on the whole, I don't like the conditions. It's a pity that soldier had to take his wife along. I don't like to have women face the danger that we have ahead of us."

"You think it won't be so easy to frighten the Indians away, now they have started on the warpath?"

"That Red Cloud is their leader. I heard yesterday that he had been chosen a chief. He has taken a lot of white scalps, and is making his brags that he will stop railroad building and steamboat running up through this region."

"Has he many warriors under him?"

"He is getting popular in his tribe, and will be able to muster a heavy force of Sioux. They're always warlike, and you know that is a powerful tribe to draw from. Then, the way they've held up that party of soldiers this side of Fort Buford shows that there must be either a big war party of the Sioux, or else a good deal of clever strategy has been used."

"Both, possibly."

"Probably both. The messenger they managed to get through to inform me of their predicament was a foolish sort of a tramp redskin, and I could hardly get a word out of him that really told me anything."

"Then how do you know that there is anything to it?"

"Because they sent a written message, which was nearly blotted out by mud and water. You see, he tried to cross the Missouri in a boat, and just as he reached the other side he had a tip-over. He was close to the shore, and yet he came within an ace of getting drowned."

"Couldn't he swim?"

"Swim! Look down at that water and tell me what you could do if you were dropped into it!"

"I have pulled through as tough a tide as that, and kept it up for a longer stretch than it would be to cross the river at this point."

"I dare say. So have I. But not in the Missouri, though, at this time of the year."

"Why not?"

"Mud! It isn't swimming in water—it is more like swimming in molasses. If you have any clothes on they are clogged with the yellow clay before you can make a stroke. The current is breaking off great sections of the banks all the time, and these are instantly dissolved into mud, and the flood is so strong that it never lets it settle. Let a man fall into this within five yards of the shore, and two to one he'll never get out alive. It would be almost as hopeless as drowning in a quicksand."

"And if this ramshackle old tub goes to pieces, as appears to be most probable, we'll all have to take our chances swimming where, as you say, no man can swim," said Ross.

"That is the situation," replied Buffalo Bill. "Well, about the message that was sent: as I said, it was so blurred and blotted with the mud and water that I could only make out the signature and two or three words. The words told me next to nothing, although they were enough to show that what the messenger said in his own words was not a trumped-up business."

"And the signature?"

"Was that of Lieutenant Whiting. There was nothing bogus about that, and with what I squeezed out of the redskin it was enough to make me hustle to go to the rescue."

"According to the messenger, the country is all picketed with Sioux, and we couldn't get through with a small party with horses without fighting every inch of the way. Then, there is no real trail open, and we would have to cross the river anyway."

"There was nothing for us to do except to intrust ourselves to the crazy craft."

"I think it will get us there—before we want to arrive, perhaps."

Just then there was a yell from the forward part of the boat.

CHAPTER II.

CALE BRANT, THE HALF-BREED.

Buffalo Bill sprang to the scene of the disturbance, and Ross followed with less hurry.

They saw a member of the boat's crew in the act of climbing to his feet, with the blood streaming from his nose, while the squat figure of Cale Brant, the half-breed

member of Buffalo Bill's party, stood over him with clenched fists.

At the same moment two others of the boat's company ran to the spot, and both of them sent their fists smashing straight at the face of the sullen Brant. The latter dodged one of the clips and parried the other, and before the men could take care of themselves, one of them was sent reeling back against the one who had the nose-bleed.

Before the affair could go any further, Buffalo Bill flung himself betwixt the combatants. One of the latter, resenting the interference, pounced upon the scout, and got thrown clear back to the boat's rail as if he was shot out of a gun.

Just then Captain Clews came stamping up to the spot. One of his own men, who chanced to be in his way, got a kick that put him out of the game.

Brant received the captain's fist between the eyes, and any ordinary man would have gone down under the blow. But the half-breed was one of the sort who seem not to feel pain. The impact shoved him back a little, and that was all. But the hit made his dark visage grow blacker, and he flew at Captain Clews like a tiger.

Altogether, it was one of the swift, sudden, mixed-up fights such as sometimes break out from an insignificant cause in a crowd of that sort. But the men engaged, and the general conditions, made it more serious than such fights usually are.

Captain Clews ordinarily ruled those under him with his iron will, which he occasionally emphasized by a kick. At other times he would pull up a more serious mutiny at the point of a revolver, and he had been known, when actually defied, to shoot his man. But Brant was not a member of the crew of Captain Clews' boat. He was not a man who had ever submitted to discipline of any kind. Therefore, the blow that he received from the captain had not the slightest effect toward subduing him.

The result was that Brant sailed into the captain and landed a blow on the latter's jaw. It was something that the man had never felt before in his life—a blow.

Buffalo Bill would have been glad enough to have prevented this extreme stage of the encounter. But he was only one man, and he could not do everything at once. Had they all pitched into him, he might have been able to take care of them. But to anticipate and prevent the swift exchange of blows between Brant and Captain Clews was an impossibility.

In a moment the blows were being landed so fast and heavy that they sounded like a man driving spikes with a hammer. There were no feints, no parrying. Every blow was landed, and if the men had not possessed skulls like those of bulls, and about the same degree of insensibility to pain, neither of them could have stood up under such punishment.

It would have been hard to say which of the two was getting the worst of the fight, until Brant went down. But he was scrambling to his feet again, just as Captain Clews leaped upon him, as if he meant to smash the life out of him.

It was here that Buffalo Bill thought it time to call a halt, although he was well aware that he was mixing himself up in a warm mess.

He thrust himself betwixt the two furious fighters, and his keen eyes flashed from the face of one to that of the other as he said:

"This has gone far enough!"

Brant drew back, breathing hard, the blood streaming from his bruised face.

But Captain Clews stood his ground, and for a moment it looked as if he would try landing one of those terrible blows on the face of the scout. But he seized Buffalo Bill by the shoulder and tried to push him out of the way instead.

"You—try to boss my boat?" he demanded.

"No. I have nothing to do with the running of your boat."

"Then get out of my way. That tough has got to get off. I'm going to pitch him into the river!"

The king of the border turned to the half-breed.

"Go to the stern of the boat, Brant," he ordered, "and see that you don't mix yourself up in anything more of

this kind. There will be enough fighting for you to do of another kind before we're many hours older."

"They pitched into me!" growled Brant, speaking for the first time.

But he began to back away, in obedience to the command of Buffalo Bill.

Captain Clews was breathing hard. He had wit enough to know that he had not just the same rights over Brant, who was a passenger, that he had over the members of his own crew. He had a right to look into the matter, and if Brant was shown to be the aggressor in the combat, he could order him to be confined, and so compelled to keep the peace. But the captain had gone the wrong way to work, and in finding his authority in conflict with that of Buffalo Bill, the commander of the scouts, the captain was in a hard place, but he had never backed down in his life. Whether right or wrong, he had always ruled on board his own boat, and the hammering he had received on the jaw made him almost beside himself with pain and anger.

"That man has got to be turned over to me—he's got to be pitched overboard!" roared Captain Clews, making a start toward the now retreating half-breed.

The latter again paused, half facing about, as if he didn't want the captain to think that he was running away from him.

The voice of the scout cut in:

"Go on, Brant! You've no right to fight the captain. Keep out of his way, that's all."

Brant turned sullenly and moved at a somewhat quicker pace away from the scene of the fight.

Captain Clews made a leap in pursuit of the fight.

Again the form of the king of the border interposed.

"Just a word, Captain Clews," said the scout, in his low, firm tones.

Clews drew back his heavily booted foot, his face purple with anger:

"Stop!"

Buffalo Bill had whipped out a revolver, and the captain was covered!

Captain Clews stopped.

The eyes of the scout, the tones of his voice, quite as much as the revolver, enforced obedience.

"Neither you nor I know who began the row," said Buffalo Bill calmly, "and so we can't decide in judgment against either your men or mine."

"The chances are that the blame rests on both sides. Men of that sort will get into a row once in a while. If mine do so, I shall stop them. If yours are in it, it is for you to deal with them as you think best. But I am taking mine out for a business that calls for nerve, and I have selected men whom I believe have that quality. Brant, the half-breed, is one who will not stand for a knocking down. But you see he obeys my orders. I shall not allow my men to be kicked or struck because they know how to take care of themselves. My idea is that it will be best for your interests and mine to let this affair pass. I will keep a watch, and if another quarrel occurs, I will know what is at the bottom of it, and if one of mine is principally to blame I will see that he is straightened out."

"As for you and me, Captain Clews, I reckon neither of us will stand much bossing. What do you say?"

Clews clenched his hands, and for a moment it looked as if he would push the scout to the extremest of measures. But he suddenly appeared to think better of it, and he said, in a low tone:

"We'll drop it, Colonel Cody."

Captain Clews turned on his heel, and the next moment was swearing at a member of his crew.

Meanwhile Brant tramped heavily out to the other end of the boat. He suddenly found himself confronted by Bertha Hallam.

"What is the matter with you, Brant?" she asked, in a low voice.

He met the gaze of her pretty eyes in sullen silence.

"Tell me," she insisted. "You have been fighting."

"Beat 'em, too!" he growled.

"Some of the men belonging to the boat?"

"Yes, and the captain thrown in."

"You fought with Captain Clews?"

"He took sides agin' me and pitched in. I cracked him four or five times on the jaw. He knocked me down, but he would have got it if Cody hadn't stepped in just then."

"You are a fool, Brant, to fight, and so make everybody take particular notice of you. You said you would be careful if I wouldn't say anything about you to Buffalo Bill."

"One of the boat hands called me a greaser. You know I ain't one of them. My mother was a Sioux and my father a French trapper from the North. I ain't a greaser!"

"And you pitched in because you were called that?"

"It was enough. They won't sling any more talk of that sort at me. I cracked their heads for them."

"That doesn't matter. But hitting Captain Clews is more serious."

"He'd killed me if I hadn't hit him on the jaw. Was I going to stand still and let him give it to me?"

"You might have gotten out of the way. But, no—you like to show off what a fighter you are. You don't want it said you would run away rather than fight. But Buffalo Bill won't put up with it, and you may be sure of that."

"I don't care for Buffalo Bill."

"He is not a man to be trifled with. Now he has probably saved you from having your head broken. That Captain Clews would kill a man that wouldn't give in to him. You can tell that by a look at his face."

"He won't get the best of me in a fair fight."

"He'll beat you if you don't keep out of his way. I have warned you, and you promised me, and, now, if you don't do as you said you would, I won't answer for what will happen to you."

The two were standing at the moment where they were hidden from the eyes of others by a miscellaneous lot of merchandise.

But as Bertha ceased speaking, Pawnee Bill stepped into view and fixed his keen eyes first on the half-breed and then upon the girl.

"That's a queer wrinkle, I'll be blanked!" he muttered, as he turned and walked away.

CHAPTER III.

UP THE RIVER.

The navigation of the Missouri became a yet more difficult matter as the boat advanced. The river became more crooked and narrow, and the current swirled and twisted into all the kinks that were possible to running water.

There was driftwood to bump against the prow of the boat, and to add to their troubles they came to a swift-running creek that dashed into the river from the southwest, making a cross current of such impetuosity that it carried the steamer clear to the opposite bank before she could again be controlled.

After that, for a few miles, it was easier, and they made better headway. Then the river grew narrow and more rapid, and the navigable channel ran close to the southwestern banks.

For some time Buffalo Bill had kept almost entirely by himself, yet on the alert to avoid more trouble between his men and those employed on the boat.

Brant rather avoided him, but the scout had no intention of reprimanding the half-breed for the part he had played in the fight. For he was by no means certain that Brant was the one chiefly to blame, and in either case he believed there was no good in making talk about it.

The scout fell to observing the timber-fringed banks of the river with a keen scrutiny, for it was from that source that he was anticipating trouble.

He was joined by Pawnee Bill. At the same time he observed several mounted figures skulking through the timber, keeping along abreast of the steamer.

This was an easy thing to do, for the boat advanced at a snail's pace against the current.

At the very moment that Pawnee Bill joined his leader there was the peculiar soft sigh of an arrow as it clipped through the left sleeve of Buffalo Bill's tunic and struck in the woodwork behind him.

The rifle of Buffalo Bill went up like a flash, and a shot was sent back even while the arrow still quivered in the wood.

He saw absolutely nothing to aim at when he fired. He had not seen the arrow when it issued from the sheltering trees; therefore he was surprised when he heard a yell of pain that told that luck had favored him even in a wholly chance shot.

"It's the beginning of trouble!" muttered the border king as he took up a position with Pawnee Bill where the enemy would not have a chance to make him their target so handily.

"Black trouble, too, unless I'm reckoning wrong," said Pawnee Bill, who was quick to take in the possibilities of the situation.

"I was sure enough that the way would be picketed by the redskins, and that a small party of white men would stand absolutely no chance of getting through with horses."

"Can't you see that they've got a good chance to play on us about as they like, with this old tub creeping up the stream?"

"We can barricade ourselves, shoot at everything that we see, and keep moving at the same time. With fifty men we could have gotten through with horses, but with less than that they would have had us."

"How many redskins do you reckon there are between us and Fort Buford?"

"I have only rumors to reckon on. One of my Rees says there are a thousand Sioux warriors between Bismarck and the fort. And it must take quite a number to hold up the company of soldiers that sent me the message."

"Thunder!" exclaimed Pawnee Bill.

"Of course, it looks like foolishness for me to come into the midst of them with such a little handful of men. But what was I to do?"

"Recruit a bigger gang."

"Will you tell me where, Gordon?"

"Bismarck and around there."

"I have got every man that I could find in the town that I dared to accept. Twenty more offered themselves, and I could have picked up a hundred easy. But they would have been more dangerous to take along than the same number right out of Red Cloud's band. Bismarck is a rendezvous of desperadoes at the present time, as you must know."

"Yes, Oh, I ain't saying you could have done any better, if you were to come at all. But why don't the government furnish soldiers enough to make an expedition of this sort a sure thing while they are about it? They always send out just soldiers enough to allow the Indians a chance to win a victory."

"If the government never started an expedition short of a thousand men, the reds would crawl into their holes and stay there."

"That is true. And I wish you, or I, or some man who knows the conditions could have a free hand with as many troops as he wanted for a border campaign. But we'll have to let the military authorities boss their affairs to suit themselves, and the fighting we do will be against such odds that we'll get off with our lives only by the closest of shaves."

By this time it was noised about the boat that there were Indians skulking along the shore of the river, and keeping pace with the steamer.

No one was aware that an arrow had been shot at any one on the boat; but all heard the report of Buffalo Bill's rifle, and soon there were plenty around him demanding the cause.

Ross was the first to get at the chief of the scouts.

To him Buffalo Bill briefly told how matters stood.

"Then we've got to keep up a running fight the rest of the way to our destination?"

"There's no doubt about it."

Captain Clews had to keep so busy, seeing that his boat was kept about its business, that it was some time before he got around to the border king. Then he felt a little sore over the encounter which he had with the scout, and in which he had to yield.

He looked grim and ugly when he finally presented

himself before Cody, with his legs wide apart and his narrow eyes fixed keenly on the scout's face.

"Injuns, I see," he growled.

"Yes, the picnic has begun."

"You ain't told me yet exactly what you expect to be up against, colonel. You seem to have a pretty small force of men for a big fight, and I reckoned it wa'n't nothing but a scouting expedition."

In a few words the scout explained the situation.

"They can't never beat us so long as we stick to *The Swan*," asserted Captain Clews.

"I hope not. But there are a lot of them, and they'll be able to shoot at us from cover and harass us every mile of the distance, night and day."

"We'll give 'em Hades! We'll— Ouch!"

Captain Clews jumped about two feet into the air, for an arrow had brushed his cheek and nipped his left ear, cutting a notch in the upper rim of it.

"That says keep to cover!" warned Buffalo Bill.

Almost at the same instant that he spoke his rifle put in its word.

This time he had seen the point from whence the arrow had issued from the woods, and he sent a shot back true to the spot. But this time, anticipating a return shot, the redskin had kept himself sheltered by the trunk of a tree, and he heard the chug of the bullet in the timber right in front of his face.

The Indians were getting evidence early in the fight of the deadly marksmanship of the king of scouts.

This time Pawnee Bill sent back a shot, and it was his luck to see a shadowy something moving at which to shoot.

As a result there came back a yelp of pain, like the bark of a coyote.

Captain Clews was nursing his notched ear and swearing. All the passengers on the boat were gathering around the scout leader—all except Brant and Bertha Hallam. These two heard the shots, and Brant had already spotted the skulking savages. He seemed to have been watching for another chance to speak to the girl, and, although the latter seemed not to seek the interview, she took no pains to avoid it.

"Pawnee Bill was watching us, Miss Bertha," said Brant, the moment that he was sure they were alone.

"Let him watch. I don't have to give an account of myself to him."

"But you do to Buffalo Bill."

"He isn't the man to pry into my affairs, and he trusts me."

"But he will wonder what we have to do with each other."

Bertha smiled, but did not reply.

She was gazing toward the shore of the river which was the more distant from the channel which the boat was following."

"You heard the shots from the boat just now, Cale?" she asked.

"Yes. Sioux, no telling how many, are following along the banks of the river, watching for a chance to strike. And we go to help out a handful of soldiers that wa'n't sharp enough to take care of themselves. The government expects a dozen soldiers to thrash a thousand redskins. They ought to know by this time that an Injun doesn't stand out in the open to be shot."

Bertha was again silent, and Brant drew nearer, lowering his voice:

"You won't say anything about me to Cody just because I got into that fight, will you, Miss Bertha?"

"I don't know."

"It won't do any good. And you'll all need me to help defend the boat against the Sioux."

"All you have got to do, Cale, is to be faithful, and not jump into a quarrel every chance you get. But you mustn't expect me to make excuses for you if you get into trouble."

"I don't care a crack about anybody but Cody."

"Mind what I have said to you and you have nothing to fear from Cody."

"You'll stand right for me with him?"

"There's no use of my saying anything about it."

They were again interrupted, this time by Philip Ross, who scowled at Brant as he said:

"Buffalo Bill advises the soldier's wife and Miss Hallam not to expose themselves to the view of the redskins on the shore. He thinks there is likely to be a general attack immediately."

"I've a good rifle, and I told Buffalo Bill to count me with his River Rovers," said the girl, meeting the gaze of Philip with her sweetly winning smile.

"Hist!" exclaimed Ross. "What is that?"

There came from the nearest shore a short, yelping cry, so peculiar in itself that it could have been nothing except a signal.

That it was a signal was proved by its repetition from fifty different points on both sides of the river.

"Yep—yep—yep—yep!" it sounded, so short and sharp that it was repeated in echoes.

Then there was a brief period of silence that was filled with a breathless sort of expectancy.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TROUBLES THICKEN.

Captain Clews had to return to his job of swearing at his crew, who seemed to be of no use when he ceased abusing them.

Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill kept from exposing themselves to the marksmanship of the Indians as a mere matter of prudence.

They well knew that even a scratch from a poisoned arrow, or a severer wound from an unpoisoned shaft, would put either of them out of the game just as quickly as it would any other member of the party. And their numbers were so light that they could not afford to have a single man disabled.

Reasonable care is never cowardice. It is oftener the reverse.

Then to their ears came that peculiar "yep—yep!" from half a hundred different points.

"I don't like it!" grumbled Pawnee Bill.

"Who does?" retorted Cody.

"They're more foxy, even, than common. And there are many of them."

"I'm not disputing that, either."

"I suppose you have some sort of a sharp scheme for beating the whole Sioux nation with the handful of men you've got on this boat, else you would not be running into them?"

"Not a scheme."

"And yet you're always saying I'm too reckless."

"You never disputed it, Gordon."

"Well, I'm going to return the compliment. On this occasion I'll say that you're wilder than I ever thought of being."

"Glad you've got a chance to throw it up to me, pard. But let me tell you, I've a lot of faith in my River Rovers, of which I count Pawnee Bill as chief lieutenant."

"How about Cale Brant?"

"He's a fighter. If we didn't find any redskins for him to work on he'd try to clean out the crew of *The Swan*, just for amusement."

"Particular friend of Miss Hallam's, is he?"

"I didn't know that he was."

"I happened to catch them talking together sort of confidential, that is why I asked."

"She might have been giving him some advice about not getting into a muss with Captain Clews. Miss Bertha is a nervy girl, and if she wanted to give Brant a calldown for fighting, she wouldn't hesitate to do it."

"Maybe that's all there was to it. But they hushed up suddenly when I appeared."

"Perfectly natural."

This exchange of words was made during the breathless silence that succeeded the peculiar cries before noted.

Suddenly, from the river bank on which Buffalo Bill kept his gaze constantly fixed, they saw a perfect cloud of smoking arrows shoot into the air, like so many rockets.

Had it been in the night time the scene would have been brilliantly illuminated by the flaming shafts, to each one of which was attached a small quantity of cotton or other absorbent saturated with turpentine.

It was this that flamed and smudged as the arrows fell like rain upon every part of the boat.

"Fire! Fire!"

It was the voice of Buffalo Bill that first raised the terrible cry.

"Fire! Fire!" in the hoarser voice of Pawnee Bill.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!"

It was taken up by Captain Clews, and he put the same vim into it that he did into the curses which he had been heaping upon his men, upon the river, the redskins, everything that bothered or defied him.

Every man on the boat who was not required to keep her steady sprang to the seemingly impossible task of saving the steamer from the flames.

Fortunately, the cargo was light, and not of a very inflammable character. But the boat itself was of wood, and the timbers were old. Fortunately, the lower parts of the steamer were well splashed with spray from the turbulent river.

Buffalo Bill assumed command of the fire-fighting brigade, and even Captain Clews found himself acting in obedience to the flood of orders that rushed from the lips of the man of many gifts.

"Scramble after the arrows and throw them into the river, wherever you find them!" was his first order.

He did not give orders alone, however—he was foremost in helping to execute them.

The young soldier, every man of the River Rovers, Captain Clews, and several of his men, all sprang to the task.

There was danger in it, for flaming arrows were still falling, although there were but a few after the first shower of them.

Bertha Hallam, keeping out of sight of Buffalo Bill as much as possible for fear that he might forbid it, also took part in the fight against the flaming arrows, and more than a dozen of the deadly shafts were dislodged with her own hands.

It was a dangerous and painful business. Saturated with turpentine, the arrows were aflame from head to feather, and to seize them was to endanger blistering the hands.

Most of them had gloves, but these were soon moist with the turpentine and then they would catch fire and have to be thrown away.

It was one of the most desperate struggles that Buffalo Bill had ever directed. The boat was ignited in a dozen places, and, as there was but little water on board, and to get it from the river was slow work, the scout leader gave orders to whip out the flames with the woolen blankets, of which there was a goodly supply on the steamer. These were made more effective in the battle by giving them a thorough wetting.

In reality, this method of fighting the fire was probably better in the amount of execution accomplished than all the buckets of water that the small number of men could have handled would have been.

So desperately, yet with such precision and thoroughness, was the fight carried on that in an incredibly brief space of time the last of the flaming shafts was disposed of, and the almost innumerable fires started by them were whipped out. But by this time the men who had done the work were begrimed, sweating, smarting with burns, and exhausted by their frantic exertions.

Perhaps there was not one of the number who did better execution than Cale Brant, the half-breed. It was an occasion that called out the fighting qualities which he was ready enough to display in any cause in which they might be enlisted.

It could not be said that any individual of the entire company shirked the work or danger in that terrible battle against the rain of fire.

The last of the fires were out. But it was a close call for the steamboat, and no man realized this better than Captain Clews.

For once he stopped swearing and blustering long enough to tell Buffalo Bill that the latter, with the help of his men, had saved the boat from swift and terrible destruction.

"I never saw a fire fit so desperate, and with such sure results before!" he declared.

In the midst of the struggles Captain Clews had more than once come into contact with Cale Brant, the half-breed. At such times they affected not to see each other. Yet the captain could not help but see that the man who had dared to hit him on the jaw, and to show himself to be defiant generally, did better execution in the battle with the fire than almost any other man of them all.

The actual result of it all was not bad. It united the men on the boat more strongly for the defense of the common cause.

Meanwhile the Indians had made several attempts to pick off the men in the more exposed positions by firing upon them from the shore with their rifles. Yet, in that respect, the Indians refrained from pressing the attack. To do so with any measure of success would have compelled them to expose their own bodies to the deadly aim of the scouts.

Of this they were especially shy.

That two such deadshots as Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill were on the boat was a fact of which they had been aware from the first.

"I wonder that they didn't try their luck at firing at us," was the comment of Philip Ross, as he and the border king chanced to meet.

"They're shy of giving us a chance at them. Besides, they reckoned that the fire would get the best of us, and that they would soon have a better chance at us."

"I reckon, too, that this is only the first of their miserable tricks."

They were soon to know what the next was to be.

CHAPTER V.

REDSKIN TRICK NUMBER TWO.

Ross had been very much in love with Bertha Hallam for some time, and, although he had never told her so, she knew how she stood in his esteem just as well as if he had done so.

In the fight to save the steamer from fire she had done her part as fearlessly as had any of the men on the boat. That does not imply that she had accomplished as much as any of them. She had not the strength for that. But she had been active in the struggle from the start, and had not spared herself in either the pain or the hazard of the ordeal.

Philip Ross had worked with desperation such as a good man will display when the girl he loves is in more than deadly peril. For, if the boat had got past help, all on board would have really been at the mercy of the horde of Indians who were waiting for the chance to attack them.

She had observed his efforts, although he did not know it, and she saw that he chose the positions that exposed him the most to the fire of the enemy, who kept sending their silent and deadly missiles toward the men on the boat whenever a good mark showed itself.

Once he had stood for some moments in a position that made him the most prominent mark presented to their sight, and several chose him for a target, and the arrows flew thick around him. It looked as if he must be doomed; and, then, that he must bear a charmed life, for he was not touched by even one of the arrows.

When a girl sees a man play a part like that, it is apt to make her think more of him than she has ever done before. Yet it is but just to Ross to say that he had no thought of winning admiration when he played the part of a hero. He was a straightforward fellow, and he had never yet shrunk from danger.

When all hands were taking breath after the struggle with the flames, Ross found Bertha applying ointment to the burns on her fingers.

"That is too bad, Miss Bertha," he exclaimed.

And with that he was at her side and gently wrapping up her hands in handkerchiefs of the softest linen.

She let him apply the bandages in silence, for the burns were painful. But she noticed some burns on his hands, which were much worse than her own, and then for the first time she spoke.

"You are burned worse than I. Now I must bind up your hurts."

"They are nothing. A man expects such trifles when he is engaged in war."

"You would not have worked so hard in ordinary war, just for glory or victory."

"Perhaps not."

"It was to save others."

"It was probably to save the soldier's bride," smiled Ross.

"The soldier ought to thank you for it."

"His bride has done that already."

"Yet she didn't bind up your burns."

"Her soldier would probably have objected."

"There may be some one who would object to your binding up mine, if you had been seen doing it."

"It wouldn't have made any difference to me if every man on the boat had ordered me not to do it."

"You would have disobeyed them all?"

"Every man of them."

"Even Buffalo Bill?"

"Even Buffalo Bill."

"He would have thrown you into the Missouri."

"Not if I could help it. There are things that even Buffalo Bill cannot do."

"Not many."

"You think so. You would think he was in the right whatever he might do."

"I have good reason for trusting him."

"And have you no reason for trusting me?"

"Why—perhaps I have. But I have known him longer, and I have good cause for liking him. There is nobody who can quite fill his place in my esteem."

"The deuce take Buffalo Bill!" snapped Philip Ross, in a flash of impatience, in which there was unmistakably a touch of jealousy.

"The deuce shan't have Buffalo Bill!" laughed the girl, and as she turned away Ross knew that he had hurt himself in her esteem by giving way to his feelings.

This bit of byplay occupied but little time, and it belonged to the softer side of the natures of the two young people. It may seem that it should have no part in a tale of peril and wild life on the frontier. Yet, but for such human impulses, there would have been nothing to push on the exploration, the gold hunting and pioneering, with all the wild and savage adventures of the border.

From such spring the making of history and romance. But Philip Ross found it rather hard work to push the fortunes of war and love at the same time with Bertha Hallam on the other side of the proposition. She was of a perverse nature, and, as yet, even Buffalo Bill could not say that he understood her character. For that matter, there was no one who could claim a thorough knowledge of her character. And, as for her history, there was no one, either, who had a knowledge of that.

There were several pages in her career of which Mr. Hallam, her uncle, was as profoundly ignorant as was any other individual of her acquaintance.

She was a bright, pretty, fascinating mystery, and Philip Ross had tackled a difficult task when he undertook to solve the puzzle.

But he was not the man to give it up easily, and now that he knew that he had made a mistake in betraying a brief jealous impulse, he resolved all the more strongly to retrieve what he had lost.

A girl is a girl, and perhaps he would discover that there was really nothing to retrieve.

Something else called upon all their energies and attention before he had time to brood over the matter.

Since the attack with fire upon the steamer by the Indians the boat had made almost no progress against the rushing current of the river. For almost an hour practically no headway was made. During that time the redskins made but few demonstrations, and these were in the shape of an occasional arrow or rifle shot fired at the boat, without appearing to be directed at any individual on the boat.

"What are they up to now?" Ross asked of Cody.

"It would take a prophet to tell. But it is nasty mischief, and you may bet high on it."

"Won't they wait until night before trying to bother us again?"

"No. They would wait until darkness to make an open

attack. But they've no idea of giving us a fair chance to shoot at them at present."

"Will they try the fire trick again?"

"I don't think so."

"Why not? They would succeed next time, I'm pretty sure of that, for we could never carry through another such fight, for it was all we could do before, and we wouldn't be in so good a shape for a second siege of the same kind."

"It would succeed, I'm afraid, if they did try it, as you say. But there is, I imagine, a good reason why they can't do it again now on the same scale."

"What is the reason?"

"About a week ago a freight train at Bismarck was raided on a siding. The most bulky stuff taken was in the shape of a cask of turpentine."

"Redskins and renegades did the raiding. That is where the turpentine came from for the arrows that were fired at this boat a little while ago."

"They prepared a lot of arrows for the purpose before the beginning of this fight, and brought them along. There must have been two or three hundred of the flaming arrows shot at the boat, some of which, of course, fell in the water. I think they used up all they had ready, else they would have kept them coming, since they would have been sure to have succeeded, as we couldn't keep up the fight forever. Of course, there is a chance that they may make up another lot of arrow torches, but I don't believe they will, as it takes time, and they have to keep on the move to keep us in sight."

"That explains it. Well, I can't think of any worse trick that they can play. It was a close call for the boat and every soul on board of her."

"When an Indian uses up the last stratagem that he has inside of his noddle he dies," said Buffalo Bill.

While they were speaking, Buffalo Bill had kept his eyes constantly on the river ahead of the boat, with occasional glances at the shores on both sides.

For a short time they had been passing along a stretch of the river which was wider and straighter than at the spot where the attack with fire had been made. Now they suddenly came upon a sharp curve in the river, and at the same point the stream narrowed abruptly, the current became correspondingly quicker.

At the same time that Buffalo Bill observed these changes he beheld something else that electrified him almost as decisively as had the arrows of fire at the moment when they began to rain upon the boat.

Just ahead of them, and sweeping down with the torrent, was a mass of uprooted trees, snags, and stumps that filled the turbulent river from bank to bank.

Captain Clews and the man at the wheel saw the coming obstructions at the same instant, and the pilot's bell told the story to the engineer.

A collision was inevitable. But the headway of the boat was quickly checked, and the next moment *The Swan* was being backed down with the current. Yet the steamer could not be gotten under way at a speed that exceeded that of the current quickly enough to wholly escape the shock of the contact with the mass of drift.

So great was the mass of deadwood and other debris which the Indians had succeeded in dumping into the stream, that it seemed to extend back up to the next short bend in the river.

There was a dull thump, a jar that nearly threw those who were unprepared flat upon the deck, then a scraping and grinding of the driftwood against the sides of the boat.

In another moment the steamer was in the midst of the mass of drift. Great snags leaped and plunged in the current like shapeless river leviathans.

As the bulk of the boat checked the driftwood which was in the van, that which followed seemed to be trying to climb over upon the deck of the craft.

Captain Clews had been in an ice jam on the river, and he knew what tactics to pursue. At the same time he knew that there was more than a good chance of the boat being smashed in pieces in such a pinch.

For once he failed to punctuate his orders with the usual number of oaths. The very gravity of the situation seemed to sober him.

Both the captain and Buffalo Bill seemed to be everywhere at once.

Yet there was little that could be done, except to allow the boat to drift with the rest of the plunging wood.

After the steamer was once fairly in the midst of the mass, the danger from the collision was over. But terrific rasping and tearing of the jagged timber against her sides was liable at any moment to crush some of her timbers and sink her.

In the midst of the turmoil of the roaring flood and crashing driftwood, there arose on the air a wild chorus of Indian yells from the shores. There were hundreds of the warriors—of this there could be no doubt—and they seemed to be about equally divided between the two banks of the river.

In the midst of their yelling they began firing, this time with rifles, and, added to the trouble the boat was in, the passengers and crew found themselves exposed to a constant spatter of bullets fired across the deck of the steamer.

The Indians took care not to expose themselves to the marksmanship of the scouts whom they knew were on board. Therefore their firing was necessarily at random, they being unable to draw bead on individuals. But the whites were, nevertheless, in constant danger of a deadly nip from the whining bullets.

"Keep to cover, every one that can!" was the imperative order of Buffalo Bill.

It was an order that was obeyed, for there could be nothing gained by needless exposure, and there was the constant chance of a great deal being lost.

Meanwhile the captain and pilot were using their utmost resources for bringing the boat through the jam of drift.

CHAPTER VI.

REDSKIN TRICK NUMBER THREE.

When they started out from Bismarck there were none of the passengers on *The Swan* who had much faith in the boat's ability to battle successfully even with the current.

When they saw the mass of drift coming down to meet them, therefore, they were convinced that the boat was doomed. But sometimes a craft which seems hardly able to sail under the fairest of conditions may weather the heaviest of storms. It was so with the river steamer under the command of Captain Clews. His faith in her cracked and patched boilers and worn-out machinery seemed to be well founded. Where a newer steamer might have been fatally damaged by the collision with the mass of drift in the impetuous current, the rough-and-ready old craft seemed to be little the worse for her experience.

The worst danger was passed after *The Swan* had fairly plunged into the midst of the drift.

To the credit of her captain and pilot, it may be said that she was navigated with consummate skill. First, she had been backed down with the current so that the force of the collision should be made as light as possible. The retrograding speed was then gradually increased until she moved with exactly the same speed as the current. Then the action was cautiously reversed, and the drift met with a gradual resistance, so slow that the mass had time to part slowly and allow the steamer to penetrate it.

This course was persisted in. Occasionally the headway would be checked and then increased again. So the boat was worked ahead, worming itself through the mass of drift which at first had threatened to crush it.

At last, with a shout from the boat's crew and Buffalo Bill's River Rovers, it was seen that the steamer was clear of the obstructions. Then the bell rang to go ahead at full speed.

Meanwhile the firing from the skulking Indians had done no damage beyond slightly wounding one of the Ree Indians of Cody's party.

Soon the boat emerged into a wider and less stormy channel, and for a time the progress was much more rapid, while its course lay at a greater distance from the shores, so that the desultory firing of the foe ceased altogether.

Not the yelling, however. That was kept up for an hour. After that there ensued several hours of comparatively smooth sailing, as they were free from the harassing attempts of the redskins, and no unusual difficulties in navigation were encountered.

The current was swift and muddy, as a matter of course, and several times they came near running aground while at all times the progress was discouragingly slow.

Up to nightfall no further signs of the Indians were seen or heard, even by the alert senses of Buffalo Bill.

Just as the shadows of dusk were settling over the river and landscape, Pawnee Bill sauntered out toward the stern of the boat with an idea of viewing the shores of the stream betwixt which they had just passed. As he did so he saw two persons who had been standing quite close to each other near the rail suddenly separate, and one of them hurried, with a peculiar gait, away from the spot.

The other Pawnee Bill recognized as Bertha Hallam, and she also moved away, but at a more leisurely pace.

"That Brant and the girl buzzing each other again!" muttered Pawnee Bill under his breath.

"Blast the yeller Injun! I'll know what he's up to if I have to choke it out of him!"

With this resolution Pawnee Bill made a leap in pursuit of Cale Brant.

The latter, not apprehending pursuit, had slackened his pace the moment he had gotten out of Pawnee Bill's sight, and he was taken wholly by surprise when the hand of the scout fell on his shoulder.

Brant wheeled instantly, and Pawnee Bill could see that a fierce light gleamed in his eyes as the gaze of the two met.

"Playing the spy!" muttered the half-breed.

"Need of it, I reckon," was the cool retort.

"You will keep out of my way and mind your own business if you've got any," growled Brant, with rising passion.

"I'll watch out for traitors every time the clock strikes, old man, and you have no need to think you can pull wool over my eyes by pretendin' to be on friendly terms with that girl."

"Call me a traitor, do ye, after I've blistered my hands to save the boat and all that are on it from burnin' up!"

Pawnee Bill hesitated.

He had seen the noble efforts of Brant when the fight with the fire was the hardest. He could not help but observe that the half-breed did not spare himself then, and that no one did more than he, with the possible exception of Buffalo Bill, to conquer the persistent flames.

"You fought the fire well enough, but I guess you would have been scorched as bad as anybody if the boat had burned up."

"If I'm a traitor, couldn't I depend on the Injuns on the shore pullin' me through?"

"I didn't say that I thought you were in league with the Sioux. I don't pretend to know what sort of game you're playing."

Brant slowly drew up his shoulders and clenched his hands.

"Do you reckon that that girl is a traitor, too?" he demanded.

"I don't know anything about the girl."

"Cody knows her—and so does Ross—and Hallam! But you are so durned high and mighty that ye don't think anybody is square unless they take you into everything, and smooth down your mug for ye! Ax Cody about the girl and—yes, blast it all!—ax the girl about me! That's all!"

Pawnee Bill was quick on the draw, and there were not many men who would have spoken to him in the way Brant had just done.

The scout was held back by the very audacity of the half-breed's speech. At the same time, from the beginning, he was in doubt about the justification for his charges and suspicions against the other.

Pawnee Bill was not the man to intend to be unfair, and these considerations held back his hand, and Brant slipped from his sight in the gathering gloom before he could make up his mind to call him to account for his words in the usual way.

"I don't know whether to pull a gun on him or not," muttered Pawnee Bill, as he gazed off into the gathering darkness.

A light hand on his arm caused him to turn like a flash. "You do that fellow injustice, Major Lillie," said the low, steady tones of Bertha Hallam.

"Maybe I do, Miss Hallam. But it is my way to get on to the safe side of the game when there are any chances."

"Possibly you are suspicious of me as well as of Cale Brant?"

"I'm not the sort to be uncivil to a lady."

"Which, I suppose, is your politest way of admitting that I fall under the same suspicion with Brant, the half-breed?"

"Greaser!" growled Pawnee Bill.

"You are mistaken. Cale Brant has no Mexican blood in his veins."

"So you've known the man from his cradle up?"

"That is hardly likely, as he must be several years older than I."

"All right. I reckon you and I won't discuss Cale Brant. Greaser or no greaser, he is not my sort. He skulks and sneaks; I face what I have to face."

"Nobody questions your honesty or bravery, Major Lillie."

"I reckon you mean well enough, but I am not going to stand by and see that greaser fool the crowd. I tell you I've got a feeling that I've seen him before."

There were too many shadows for him to see the pallor that flitted across the girl's face. Had he observed the expression he would have wondered more than ever.

"Beware and not show a stranger injustice through an unreasonable prejudice," she warned, and then left him.

The next moment the girl was face to face with Buffalo Bill, who said:

"Pardon me, Miss Bertha, but I heard all that you and Pawnee Bill just said to each other, because I didn't wish to interrupt you, and I couldn't get away without letting you know I was here."

"I'm not sorry you overheard."

"It was about Cale Brant?"

"Yes."

"Pawnee Bill thinks he is a traitor?"

"He doesn't exactly say that."

"And you stand up for him?"

"Yes."

"Then you knew him before he joined my party at Bismarck?"

"Yes."

"Is that all you wish to say about the matter, Miss Bertha?"

"It is all I feel that I have a right to say."

"You know I'm a pretty square sort of man to trust?"

"Yet I feel that I can say no more about Cale Brant."

"Very well—I shall not insist. I wished to tell you that we are going to face a pinch pretty soon and— Ah! What now?"

The steamer came to a sudden stop, with a shock, as if it had run aground, and the voice of Captain Clews rang across the boat.

An instant later the air became vibrant with the hideous yells and whoops of several hundred Sioux warriors.

CHAPTER VII.

THE IMPRISONED STEAMER.

What had happened?

This was the question which was either spoken or more silently expressed by every individual on board the boat at the moment that the steamer's progress was stopped.

"A snag!" was the verdict of several.

"Run aground!" was a less general belief.

"Indian trick number three!" was the announcement of Buffalo Bill, and this solution was accepted grimly by Pawnee Bill and Captain Clews.

It was at the most easily navigable point on the river above Bismarck, as the pilot well understood.

The channel was remarkably deep and straight, and as a consequence, while the current was strong, it was not so impetuous or difficult to stem.

"Back her!" was the order from Captain Clews, as soon as it became evident that no headway could be made.

This was done, but cautiously.

She moved slowly about thrice her own length, and then stopped as she had done before, only with a lighter shock, as she was moving at a lower rate of speed.

Another chorus of those hideous, jubilant yells greeted the second halt of the steamer.

Captain Clews grew profane again.

"Go ahead!" he howled to the pilot. "And rip her through if it smashes her nose! Ram her through, I say!"

Buffalo Bill's gaze was fixed on the shores. They were crowned by low, wooded bluffs on one side, and higher bluffs, also wooded, on the other.

The shadows extended entirely across the river, shutting out what little daylight that remained. The river might have been a river of ink, so far as the looks were concerned.

Not an object on its surface would have been visible, unless that object had been sufficiently light in hue to have presented a contrast. This fact made Buffalo Bill as uncomfortable as any one circumstance, and he set himself to watch the surface of the stream as the boat once more started ahead at full speed.

"Full speed" should not be understood as meaning anything very swift, for the boat at best would have been slow, and with the force of the impetuous Missouri against it, its greatest headway was tantalizingly moderate.

But the pilot rang for full speed, and the engineer did his best, and the old tub really showed up the best she had done at any time since the beginning of the upriver journey.

Bump!—against the hidden obstruction once more.

This time the steamer recoiled slightly, and then crowded up against the obstruction, quivering from stem to stern, while the water was churned into a white foam.

But it was useless—and dangerous.

The motive power was shut off, and the struggle ceased. The Indians had ceased their yelling, and this time the boat was stopped; an ominous silence prevailed.

Buffalo Bill found the captain, whose face was purple with rage—the rage of a strong-willed man who finds himself balked in a fair attempt.

"Blank it all!" he roared. "What is the trouble, anyhow?"

"Have you a small boat that can be rowed in that current, captain?"

"I've a small boat, and if you say it must be rowed against a gale on the bloomin' Atlantic, away she goes!"

"Lower the boat, then, and with the best men to handle it."

"I'll take an oar myself, and if I can't hold the nose of the boat anywhere you say, I'll swallow all the dirty drink in the Missouri!"

"Go ahead. Pawnee Bill and I will go with you, but we don't want to bother with oars or paddles, so furnish your own crew. We'll be likely to have something else to attend to."

Almost before these words were out of the mouth of the king of bordermen, Captain Clews was giving the orders. And he gave them in such fashion that they were obeyed in a twinkling.

The boat was lowered until it nearly touched the water, and then the crew descended into it, followed by Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill.

To the latter the border king had given his theory of the situation while the boat was being made ready.

"A rope across the river is what stops the steamer!" exclaimed Pawnee Bill when the leader of the River Rovers had stated his idea of the difficulty.

"Did I say a rope? If I did, I didn't mean one of the size of a clothesline or a kite string. You knew about the Indian raid on the railway freight cars, and the plunder they took off with them?"

"I heard something about it. You say the turpentine that they just tried to fire the boat with probably came from that raid."

"It did. I happen to know of most of the merchandise that the redskins got hold of at that time. I remem-

ber that a coil of two-inch cable rope was among the plunder.

"They have strung two lines of that cable across the river—one in front and another in the rear of the steamer. The boat couldn't safely try to break it. Perhaps with the help of the current we could, but in that case we would merely have to beat a retreat."

"We won't do that?" growled Pawnee Bill.

"I reckon not, till we have made a try for the other thing. Now they're ready for us. It isn't best for us to risk any more of my men in the boat. If anything should happen it wouldn't be best to have the steamer left alone."

"That's right, and you better go back and leave me to cut the cable."

"I'll need to stand by and do some shooting while you're cutting, maybe," said Buffalo Bill.

"Do you reckon the redskins will leave the shore and trust themselves on the river, right under our noses?"

"They're likely to be swarming onto the boat any minute. That is what they have stopped us for. We are in a miserable trap unless we can get under way again, and that mighty quick."

By this time the boat was ready, and the scouts lowered themselves into it.

Pawnee Bill was more inclined to underestimate the courage and fighting abilities of the Indians than was the chief of the River Rovers.

No man ever fought against greater odds and won than Buffalo Bill. Yet no one ever knew him to speak contemptuously of the more warlike Indians as fighters. He well knew that, in the history of the Indian wars of the country, it had cost the lives of more than fifty white persons to kill a single Indian, on an average. Yet fifty trained soldiers would put a thousand redskins to flight, under favorable conditions, in an open battle.

As soon as the scouts were seated in the boat, Captain Clews, who only waited for the word of Buffalo Bill for each move on the program, bent toward the scout and said:

"Shall we drop into the water, Cody?"

"Wait a moment."

The swash of the river against the sides and prow of the steamer was the only sound that could be heard.

Buffalo Bill was straining his eyes to discern the surface of the stream so as to make sure that none of the foe was creeping up to them in the darkness.

But no sign of the Indians was discernible. Their absolute silence was, in the estimation of the scout leader, the most ominous of signs.

It should be remembered that the force of the current would have carried the steamer down to the obstacle which had checked its flight astern.

To overcome this tendency of the current the motive power of the boat was given just headway enough to keep the steamer nearly stationary, with her nose up against the unseen obstruction.

As there were no definite signs of the Indians, and the chief danger lay in delay, Buffalo Bill gave the signal to drop the boat to the surface of the stream.

It was instantly obeyed, and the stay ropes cast off.

The instant that the boat felt the impetuous force of the river it would have shot down the stream, but for the ready and disciplined stroke of the oars in obedience to the command of Captain Clews.

As it was, it was swept down for a short distance—about one-half its own length—and then it took considerable effort to propel it back to the point where the obstruction was believed to be.

But the border king, seated in the prow of the boat, and peering ahead into the darkness, soon beheld what he had expected to find—a heavy rope cable stretched across from shore to shore of the river, just in front of the steamer.

He gave a low order to the man next to him in the boat, and it was passed along to the rowers.

It was the command to push ahead for the distance of a yard, and then to hold the boat steady in that position.

The command was obeyed.

At the same time a knife flashed in the hand of the scout, and a slash was made at the cable.

But a swirl of the ever-restless current of the river at that instant jerked the boat backward just enough to render the attempt to sever the rope ineffective.

The knife touched the cable, nevertheless, and the point of it clung so that the scout, reaching forward to his limit, was nearly thrown out into the water.

He recovered himself just in time, and at the same instant a stronger stroke of the oars sent the boat fairly up against the cable.

But before another stroke with the knife could be made, there was a savage yell from the deck of the steamer, followed by a woman's scream!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BATTLE ON THE BOAT.

Buffalo Bill knew only too well what had happened. The Indians had stealthily approached the steamer from the opposite side, and while he and his companions were engaged in the attempt to cut the cable, they had clambered onto the steamer.

At the moment that the bloodcurdling yell and frightened scream broke upon the night, the border king gave no order and uttered no word.

The small boat had again pressed up to the rope, and this time the swift, strong stroke of the scout's knife severed the obstructing cable.

Again he uttered a low-spoken order, which was passed along to Captain Clews. The latter, and his men as well, had preserved the best of discipline even when the sounds of the Indians on the steamer came to their ears.

Not an outcry of any kind was made, and when the word came from Buffalo Bill, telling them that the cable was cut, and asking that the boat be hoisted back to the deck of the steamer, the captain in turn gave the necessary directions.

The dangling, grappling hooks that hung from above were again fastened to the small boat and the signal given to pull them up. They might have scrambled on board without this aid, but not so quickly or without danger of falling into the river, a most undesirable contingency in that swift-moving current.

The men on the deck hauled up the boat in a twinkling, and Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill were out of it before it had come to a stop.

By this time there were sounds of conflict on the other side of the steamer, and the scouts, including those of Cody's party, and his River Rovers, sprang to take a hand in the battle.

Cale Brant had been stationed near the other side of the steamer at the time the boat was lowered to the water, for the purpose of guarding against a surprise in that quarter. This circumstance was known to Pawnee Bill, and when he heard the sounds of attack in that quarter, a suspicion that the half-breed had not been faithful immediately occurred to him. But he did not speak of it then. He did not like to imply that Buffalo Bill had been overcredulous concerning the honesty of the intentions of Cale Brant.

There was a mystery about the half-breed which had bothered Pawnee Bill from the first, and it was in his nature to suspect the purposes of a man who was not open in his words and manner. To the mind of Pawnee Bill, if a man had a secret it must necessarily be a guilty one.

In the dash for the scene of conflict on the deck of the steamer the two Bills became separated.

Cody saw a mass of forms struggling on the deck, and in the dim light he made out the form of the young soldier, and two or three of his own Rovers engaged in a desperate hand-to-hand combat with fully a score of redskins.

The next instant Buffalo Bill plunged into the fray, and while it was risky to use his revolvers in such a mixed-up conflict, on account of the danger of hitting friends as well as foes, he ventured to send in a few quick, yet carefully directed, shots before engaging the Indians hand-to-hand.

Pawnee Bill, from another quarter, pursued almost the same tactics, only he took more risks, firing a half dozen shots into the struggling mob. Pawnee Bill chose his marks well, and it is certain that he missed none of them. When Buffalo Bill hurled himself into the conflict, the tide seemed to change instantly.

Several Indians had been dropped by the shots, and the deck became slippery with their blood.

The first with whom Cody grappled received the scout's knife betwixt his ribs, and sank to the deck with a groan.

The next was able to make only a slight resistance before he met a similar end.

A third, who chanced to be near the rail, received a terrible fist blow in the face that sent him reeling backward, and then another drove him over the rail into the river.

So the king of bordermen swept through the redskins who swarmed on the deck of the steamer like a cyclone, and every blow told.

By this time Captain Clews was on duty, and he knew what was going on. He sent two or three of his men to assist in beating off the Indians, but for his own part he saw that the boat was again gotten under way at her best speed, for he well knew that there were other redskins at hand ready to take the places of those who were killed or thrown overboard by Buffalo Bill and his River Rovers.

As the fight grew more desperate, the yells of the savages became fiercer. They realized that the boat was under way, and that there was no chance for them to return to the shore except by the almost hopeless one of trying to swim in the muddy flood.

At the same time that the steamer started ahead at full speed, another chorus of yells went up from the surface of the river, where several boatloads of the Indians were approaching with the intention of joining those on the steamer.

They could not hope to overtake the steamer by the use of their paddles, and they knew that their comrades on the big boat could not get off if they were defeated.

That the Indians in the fight were getting the worst of it those in the boats were informed by the character of the yells on the deck of the steamer.

"Go for the red devils!" shouted Buffalo Bill, as he saw that he and his comrades were getting the better of the struggle.

The voice of the scout put new vim into the arms of his River Rovers, most of whom had received cuts and bumps from the enemy. But the fact that not a man of the River Rovers had been put out of the fight entirely testified to the good judgment of Buffalo Bill in his choice of men.

At the beginning, when Cody first went into the mêlée, he was certain that he observed Cale Brant in the midst of the scuffling throng. But he soon lost sight of him.

There were probably about twenty Indians on the steamer at the beginning of the fight. When the River Rovers and several members of the crew, including the young soldier, got into it, there were about a dozen white men opposed to the redskins. This was too much for the Sioux. They had expected unlimited reinforcements, for they had no thought of the steamer again being started ahead, for they thought that they had the boat and all on board in a trap. Now they found that, instead, they were themselves in a hopeless pinch.

Cody drove his fist with smashing force into the face of the last of the Indians who was in shape to fight, and saw him go over the rail.

Eight of the redskins lay dead on the deck of the boat. Four were hopelessly wounded, and their wailing death song rose dismally on the air as the sounds of the battle ceased.

The balance of the number who had gained a foothold on the steamer had been forced overboard, and had to finish their strife with the relentless current of the muddiest and most impetuous of the great rivers of the world.

Then, for the first time, Buffalo Bill had time to look about him and count up the costs of the victory.

Counting Pawnee Bill, who had hardly received a scratch, all his men save one were on hand, although one of the Ree Indians had a wound which needed attention.

Pawnee Bill, who was about as handy in surgery as Cody, attended to the wounded friendly, while Buffalo Bill looked about to see if the nonfighting passengers were safe.

The young soldier had borne a sturdy part in the battle, and immediately after it became certain that the Indians were beaten, for the time at least, he hurried to see if his young wife was safe. Buffalo Bill met him just coming out of the cabin. Ross was with him, and the faces of both were paler than they had been when they were engaged with the Indians, the latter numbering two to one against them.

The soldier, whose name was Floyd, was the first to speak.

"They're gone, both of them—my wife and Miss Hallam!"

"And Cale Brant!" added Philip Ross grimly.

"You mean that the three you have named are not on the boat?" demanded Buffalo Bill.

"The three are missing," replied Ross.

"You haven't searched the whole boat over yet—there hasn't been time."

"No, but the young women promised to remain in the cabin until one or both of us came for them."

"You can't depend on a promise of that sort. They might think you had got the worst of the battle, and so came out to see for themselves. You know that Miss Hallam would want to take a hand in the scrimmage if she could, and I reckon it wouldn't be easy to keep her out of it for a great length of time."

"No, we won't give up the search of the boat, because they happen not to be in just the spot where you left them. They were too much alive, both of them, to keep still like a pair of dummies."

"I'll have the boat scoured for them within three minutes' time. Then, if we find no sign of them, we'll do the next best thing."

Buffalo Bill did not wait to reply to the argument which Floyd might have made that he was sure his bride would not stir until he had given her permission.

Ross made a dash into the search on his own hook, and soon every man on the boat knew that Brant and the two young women were missing.

The suspicions of Ross and Pawnee Bill concerning Cale Brant immediately became circulated, and within a short space of time there was hardly a man on the boat, excepting Buffalo Bill, who did not believe that Brant was a traitor, and that he was responsible for the disappearance of Bertha Hallam and Mrs. Floyd.

For, with all its thoroughness, the search for the missing ones proved to be futile.

When Buffalo Bill realized that Bertha and the soldier's bride had been spirited off, his usually calm countenance became convulsed with emotions to which his lips gave no expression at the time.

He sought Captain Clews.

"You'll have to stop the boat, captain," he said, so gruffly that the other stared at him in surprise.

"What for?" was the demand.

"Miss Hallam and Mrs. Floyd are missing."

"Missing! How in thunder could they get off the boat when they were ordered to stay in the cabin?"

"It don't make any difference how, so long as we know that they did. It is up to me to find them."

"Must be the Injuns played some sort of a trick, unless that infernal Cale Brant, the half-breed, had a hand in the game."

"I wish, captain, that you would stop the boat without delay!" snapped Buffalo Bill.

Clews did not hesitate after that imperative order.

The boat was stopped.

Meanwhile the greatest confusion reigned on the steamer.

Floyd seemed to forget that he was a soldier, and was making as much fuss as a baby over the loss of his young wife.

Philip Ross, hardened by his experience of the past

year, was silent and grim until he found himself face to face with the border king.

Then he exclaimed:

"This comes of trusting that greaser, as they call him!"

Cody smiled faintly as he asked:

"So you hold me responsible for this disaster?"

It was a hard question, and Ross was silent for a moment.

CHAPTER IX.

BOLD WORK.

Then Ross spoke, more calmly:

"I don't hold you responsible, Mr. Cody—it would be worse than absurd for anybody to accuse you of anything like treachery or carelessness in such a case as this."

"Oh, you don't think I meant to have it happen? But you suspect that I was overcredulous about the character of Cale Brant."

"The best of us trust too far sometimes. I suppose you have made mistakes in your life?"

"Many of them. And I have been deceived in the character of more than one person that I thought to be all right. It may turn out that I have been this time; but I'm not going to give it up that way until I know the truth about this matter. When this thing was done I was in the small boat cutting the cable that blocked the steamer. Pawnee Bill was with me. Where were you, Mr. Ross?"

"I was with your Ree Indians watching out for the redskins."

"Where was Brant?"

"I didn't see him; I think he went into the cabin where the women were, now I think of it."

"And Floyd?"

"After he had left his wife in the cabin he joined me on the lookout."

"Then the Indians came aboard with a rush?"

"Yes."

"And you and Floyd with the Rees were together, then?"

"We were near each other."

"You are sure that Brant wasn't on deck?"

"I'm very sure."

"Yet he was out during the fight, and you must have seen him?"

"Yes, I believe I saw the fellow at the beginning of the fight, but it was too dark to make anybody out very clearly, and I had my hands full about that time trying to beat back the Sioux who were swarming over the rail."

"You couldn't say positively, then, whether or not he took a hand in the attempt to drive back the redskins?"

"No, I couldn't be certain on that point. I took it for granted at the time that he was doing his part, for I didn't then really suspect him of treachery."

While Buffalo Bill and Philip Ross were talking, the steamer was brought to a stop.

"Will all hands go ashore after the women?" demanded Pawnee Bill at that moment, as he came upon the chief of the River Rovers.

"No, I would like you to stay with all hands, except Ross, and maybe Floyd, if he can't be persuaded to stay behind, to look out for the steamer. If that falls into the hands of the redskins while we're cruising around ashore we are cut off from any chance of retreat."

"The steamer must move up and down the river as a patrol until she is signaled by me. By keeping on the move there will be smaller chance of the redskins swarming on board again as they did when we were cutting the cable."

"And you want to take only one or two men with you when you go ashore?"

"One is enough. If Floyd is bound to go I'll have to let him, but I expect he will be more bother than help."

"Of course you reckon that you can beat the whole crew of Sioux, even if there are a thousand of them," said Pawnee Bill with a smile.

"I expect to find if the young women are in the hands of the devils easier without help than I could with a

whole regiment of soldiers to back me up. And when I have located them it will call for a still game to rescue them. And one man can be stiller than a hundred."

"I know what you're figuring on, Cody, and it's right, too. Go ahead, and if you glimpse Cale Brant the greaser, better shoot before he does. His heart is blacker than thunder!"

"Remains to be seen," muttered Buffalo Bill, as he went to have a boat prepared to assist him in making a landing.

He held a brief consultation with Captain Clews, first setting forth his intentions, and advising that the steamer be kept in motion up and down the river, awaiting signals from him on the shore.

He hastily outlined a brief code of signals, which the captain could not fail to remember and heed at the proper moment.

At first Floyd had been nearly frantic over the disappearance of his young wife, for he could conceive her being subject to only the most horrible of fates. She had indeed fallen into the clutches of the Sioux. But he was a soldier in training and character, and soon brought himself to a state of mind in which better judgment again held sway.

Buffalo Bill briefly informed him of his plans for the rescue of the young women.

"I think," said Floyd, "that I can accompany you on the expedition without proving a hindrance, and there is a chance of my being of help if you will only point out a line of action which I will scrupulously follow."

"In other words, Cody, I ask you to regard yourself as the officer and me as a private soldier, thinking of absolute obedience to your commands."

"Good, Floyd!" exclaimed the scout. "You shall go with me and face the danger, as you wish. Ross will complete our party of three. There'll be some big risk, but I'll be in the front."

The small boat was ready by this time.

Since the end of the battle on board the steamer nothing had been heard of the Indians on the shore.

Buffalo Bill, with Ross and Floyd, got into the boat, and two of the steamer's crew helped to row them to the shore.

They were fortunate enough to strike a point where landing was comparatively easy. When they jumped ashore and the boat started back for the steamer no word was spoken, as the scout leader had insisted on absolute silence.

The river bank rose from the water in a steep bluff with thick woods at the top. It was a hard climb in the darkness, and not until they had reached the upper level did Buffalo Bill make any examination of the ground in quest of a trail.

He had kept careful note of the position of the steamer at the time it had been blocked, which was the period when the capture of the women had undoubtedly been made. He knew that the captors must have made their landing at a point about two hundred yards below that where he and his companions had gone ashore, and he did not waste any time in looking for tracks at this point, therefore, but led the way down the stream for about the distance which he judged would be right. Then he halted and produced his pocket lantern, taking care that its rays should not penetrate any distance from his hand.

Still not a word had been spoken since landing, and his companions followed him mutely, as if they had implicit confidence in the seeming instinct which guided him.

To the minds of Ross and the young soldier it seemed perfectly marvelous that this cool, quiet scout should move from spot to spot in the darkness with the precision and purpose of a perfect knowledge of the lay of the land, while they had the best of reasons for believing that Buffalo Bill had never before touched foot on the banks of the Missouri in that vicinity.

The scout evidently had a definite purpose in every move that he made.

At the point where he began to look for tracks the slope up from the river was less steep, and he felt sure that the enemy had made their ascent from the river at or near that point, since the landing became more difficult

farther they might go up the stream. Besides, the force of the current was so great that it would not have been possible for them to paddle against it for a very great distance.

Presently the scout spoke, for the first time breaking the silence which had been maintained from the moment of landing.

"They came this way," he announced.

He hurried along the ridge, holding the small light focused upon the trail.

His companions had almost to run to keep up with him.

At last he halted, and spoke again.

"Only a single boatload of the redskins landed at the point where I first found this trail. I'm pretty sure that it is almost exactly opposite the point where the steamer was blocked by the cable, and the fight took place."

"And the young women?" Floyd breathlessly asked.

"Oh! They were with the redskins," said the scout, as if he had been sure of it all along.

"You are sure?" asked Ross.

"Perfectly. Here are their tracks. And the reds had another prisoner."

"Another prisoner?"

"Certainly. It was Cale Brant, the half-breed."

An ejaculation of amazement, tinged with doubt, came from the lips of the two young men.

"Easy on the noise you make," cautioned Buffalo Bill.

"Some of the reds are likely to be close by, and I reckon the main body of them is within less than a mile of here, with some scattered up and down the river for two or three miles farther. We've got to go rather slow."

"But you think Cale Brant is a prisoner with Miss Bertha and Mrs. Floyd?"

"Yes."

"He may be with them, but how do you know that he is a prisoner?"

"Because he walked by himself, with an Indian just ahead of him and another close at his heels. The distance between him and his captors is exactly the same all the way. They would let him get only just so far away from them. I'm not mistaken, boys. But there's close work ahead of us."

Even as the king of bordermen spoke, the sound of lightly running footsteps came to their ears.

CHAPTER X.

IN THE CAMP OF THE ENEMY.

Buffalo Bill drew his companions back with a quick movement that showed his knowledge of the danger.

"Squat!" he commanded, in a whisper.

He was the first to drop into the attitude named, and the others were not long behind him.

They were not a second too soon.

An Indian came into view, moving at a light, easy run, turning his face alertly to the right and left as he passed.

He halted abruptly within a dozen feet of the crouching form of the scout leader, and, like an animal that scents the foe that it cannot see, he held his head erect in a listening attitude.

For fully two minutes the redskin seemed not to stir a muscle. It was as if he had been suddenly changed to a statue.

Buffalo Bill and his companions were as silent as the Indian runner.

The nerves of the scout were tense, and for the moment the life of the redskin hung by a chance that was more delicate than a hair.

His chances for life all depended upon his own movements. Were he to detect the presence of the white men his own doom would be sealed almost before he could have drawn a breath, for the blow that the border king would have struck would have been like a bolt from heaven.

But the Indian did not observe the watchers crouching there in the darkness. Yet it was probable that something in his keenly sensitive nature warned him, as by an intuition, of the danger that hung so close to him.

At last he started ahead again, resuming the light, al-

most noiseless running pace with which he had first come into view.

The next move of Buffalo Bill was as decisive as was that of the Sioux.

"Stay here," he breathed, rather than spoke, as he started off in pursuit of the Indian.

He hurried along almost at the very heels of the other, but so silently that the little noise made by the Indian covered the sounds of the scout's pursuing footsteps. This pursuit was kept up for several minutes. At the end of that period the Indian halted again, so abruptly that Buffalo Bill ran a good chance of coming up with him involuntarily.

The scout stopped barely in time. He understood why the redskin had stopped running.

There was an encampment of his comrades just ahead, and the Indian's halt was made merely as a matter of ordinary precaution before entering the camp.

At the same moment he sent out a signal sound which was an imitation of the bark of a coyote. Then, without waiting for it to be answered, he walked silently forward into the midst of the camp.

Buffalo Bill waited briefly, and then advanced to a sheltering tree from whence he could observe, partially, the camp.

There was a natural opening among the trees, and this had been enlarged somewhat by the cutting of trees which were in the way.

A bright fire was burning, and it was evident that the large numbers of the Indians in the vicinity made them careless of some of the precautions which they might have observed in case their force were smaller, and the presence of a dangerous force of whites were suspected.

The little force on board of the river steamer was evidently not considered at all dangerous by the Indians. They expected to wipe them out entirely before they should be able to reach their destination.

Buffalo Bill surveyed the camp of the enemy as best he could from his point of concealment.

His first wish was to ascertain if the prisoners were in this camp. In this he was disappointed when he made certain that they were not to be seen from the spot where he was stationed at the moment. But as he could observe only a part of the camp from that point it was by no means certain that the captives were not present in it.

He worked his way cautiously around to the left until he gained a new viewpoint.

There were about two hundred Indians in the camp, a number which made the possibility of discovery an extremely hazardous one.

Buffalo Bill was smitten by a shock of unwelcome surprise soon after gaining his new point of observation.

It will be remembered that he had so read the trail of the Indians and their captives that he had declared that Cale Brant, the half-breed, was a prisoner, and that he was not accompanying them of his own free will.

Yet he now saw Brant step out from the midst of a group of warriors and advance toward the fire, where he paused and stood for a brief space as motionless as a statue.

A dull flush of inward rage crept into the cheeks of the king of bordermen. Of all things in the world, an imposition on his confidence excited his anger. He hated treachery.

Up to this time he had stanchly maintained that Cale Brant was not a traitor. He had not held on to that belief out of the mere wish to prove that he could not be mistaken, but because, to his mind, there were good reasons for believing in the half-breed.

In the sweep of angry disappointment that came over him at the sight of the half-breed, apparently free and unharmed, in the midst of the hostile Indians, for the moment came near overcoming every other consideration in his mind.

Up went his rifle, and the sight covered the heart of Cale Brant. The life of the latter hung just then by a chance less slender than a hair.

But he remembered that there was something more than revenge to be thought of then.

If the young women were captives among these Indians their rescue in time to save them from harm would

have to be effected at once. A shot at this time into the midst of such a powerful body of the foe would almost certainly result in his own death or capture, since there was no good chance of flight, and he could not hope to vanquish the whole of them single-handed.

Therefore he reluctantly lowered the weapon, but with the silent resolve to make the traitor pay a just penalty for the part which he had evidently played.

Yet, even while the scout made this resolution, he was assailed by a vague misgiving, which, however, seemed to have no reasonable excuse behind it.

The half-breed at that moment moved away from the fire, and disappeared among the shadows at the edge of the opening.

Buffalo Bill immediately undertook to work his way around to the point where Brant had disappeared. It required extreme caution, yet he succeeded in time in reaching the point desired.

Of course, he had to keep back from the camp at first, for fear of encountering Brant or some of the Indian sentinels.

Approaching cautiously, he suddenly found himself almost within arm's length of a half dozen Indians who were guarding the female prisoners.

It was a little startling to find himself so close to the captives that he might easily reach out and touch the arm of the nearest of the two.

Yet one of the Indians was equally near, and, with the main body of the enemy so close that the slightest alarm would have brought them to the spot in a mob, the chance of a rescue for the time being seemed to be a slender one.

"But what became of Brant?" was the query that flashed through the brain of the scout.

Bertha Hallam and Mrs. Floyd were seated side by side on a blanket, and three stoical redskins sat facing them. They could not stir or speak without being closely observed. The rest of the guards were posted on the opposite side of the prisoners.

"It is a miserable trap!" thought Buffalo Bill.

For once in his life he was at a loss for the best immediate course of action. He decided that, in part, it would have to be a waiting game. Yet his wits were at work, and the Sioux, without knowing it, were being subjected to a critical eye measurement that was not to be without a substantial result.

The scout was anxious to get to the women some signal that should tell them that an effort for their deliverance was being made. This would, at least in a measure, relieve their anxiety.

He waited for an opportunity to do this with a patience which could not have been surpassed by one of the Indian warriors.

It was evident that the Indian party were in camp for the rest of the night, and that the major part of them intended to get some sleep.

"They've had their supper, or they wouldn't be keeping so quiet," was the reflection of the waiting scout. "At the same time, there will be enough of them to stay awake to make it ticklish business to try for a rescue while they're all together. There would be a better chance of my doing something, in case there was an opening, if the girls could know that an attempt might be expected.

"It won't do to try to convey a sign to Mrs. Floyd. She is a tenderfoot, and would probably let out a squeal to start with. Miss Bertha is of another sort. She has good nerve. If she knew I was right here now she wouldn't betray it by a sign. If I wanted her to do anything, she would be quick to take the hint, and she wouldn't spoil everything by a blunder.

"Ah! I have it."

The scout took from a pocket a small scrap of blue ribbon which Bertha Hallam had cut from a tie which she wore at her throat.

She had clipped it off because it was frayed out, and, as Buffalo Bill had chanced to be standing near her at the time, she had playfully laid it on his sleeve, and he, in the same playful manner, had taken it off, made a bow of mock gallantry, and placed it in a pocket "over his heart."

This had been done two or three days before the occurrence of these events, and until this moment he had forgotten that the ribbon was still on his person.

Now he bent cautiously forward, stretched out his hand, and dropped the scrap of ribbon in such a manner that it fell fluttering into the girl's lap.

"If she sees it, she will know where it came from," was the scout's thought.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SCOUT'S STRATEGY.

Buffalo Bill waited almost breathlessly for the response to his simple trick for attracting the attention of the girl, and of telling her that he was near her, and waiting for a chance to effect her rescue.

As first he thought that she had not seen the scrap of ribbon, for she gave no sign of having done so. She sat as motionless as if she were asleep. Yet her hands were not bound, her ankles only being hampered, as she was so closely watched that there was no chance of escape unaided, even if there was not a bond of any sort to hamper her.

Presently one hand went to her lap, where the souvenir ribbon lay. The fingers picked it up carelessly, held it for a moment, and then slowly raised it to her lips.

The act, to the eyes and mind of the border king, had a double significance, and it would be hard to describe the emotions which it excited in his heart. He wondered why he had been called upon repeatedly to rescue, and otherwise to act, as the benefactor of this girl. She, too, had saved his life—indeed, that had been almost the beginning of their acquaintance.

When a man, in the prime of life, is brought into such a relation with a bright, almost brilliant young woman, and he is made to feel at times that she feels something rather stronger than friendship for him, he has to be something more than human not to be impressed by the fact.

Yet, he reflected, her act of touching her lips to the bit of ribbon might in reality have been but a woman's delicate and romantic way of telling him that she was aware of his presence—that she recognized the souvenir and comprehended his purpose in causing it to fall under her eyes.

After the simple sign of that recognition which she had given, she again relapsed into an attitude of hopeless weariness. But a little later she bent her face toward her companion and whispered a few words in her ear.

Mrs. Floyd started, and Buffalo Bill knew then that Bertha had told her of his presence.

"Now they'll be prepared, in any event," was his reflection.

It was not easy for him to curb his impatience for the first stroke for their rescue. Never in his life had he felt such an impulse to act in a headlong and imprudent manner. He had a strange feeling that every moment of delay made the chance of rescue smaller—that there would soon come a change in the situation which would make the difficulty even greater than it was at present. As if this feeling had been prophetic, he heard sounds of sudden commotion in the camp.

From the place where he was stationed he could not see the main part of the camp. But the Indians were so near that he could hear their ejaculated utterances, and he judged that there had been a new arrival in the camp.

The scout moved cautiously around in the direction of the other side of the camp to the first viewpoint, whence he could observe all parts of the encampment except that where the prisoners were detained.

He again looked into the camp, and he saw that there had indeed been other arrivals, in the persons of several Indians, one of whom was the chief, Red Cloud. He recognized the latter instantly.

The chief was at the moment giving some rapid and stern orders in the Sioux tongue, and he spoke in such a low tone that the scout could not catch their import. But a moment later he saw a dozen of the warriors dash

toward the end of the camp where the captives were held.

"The devils!" exclaimed the scout, under his breath. "What are they up to now?"

The question had hardly passed his lips before he heard a scream of terror, which he knew came from Mrs. Floyd.

Buffalo Bill made a bound back toward the spot which he had just left, but had not gone a dozen paces before he collided with full force with a redskin who was walking, with his face close to the trail, in the opposite direction.

A grunt of surprise broke from the lips of the savage. Before he could utter any other outcry, the scout's hand clutched his throat and the Indian was borne to the ground strangling in the scout's terrible grip.

The repeated screams from Mrs. Floyd at the moment served to cover up the sounds which were made in the struggle between Buffalo Bill and the Indian.

That struggle was of brief duration, and it was something that the Indian would never have to go through again.

When it was finished, and the redskin was quivering in his death throes, Buffalo Bill hurried back to the spot where he had left Miss Hallam and her companion.

He had not forgotten about Cale Brant and his mysterious disappearance from the camp, where he had seemed to be in possession of his fullest liberty.

Now, as he approached the spot where he had stood and made his presence known to Bertha Hallam a few moments before, he became aware of a singular fact. This was that the voice of Mrs. Floyd, who had been screaming, was becoming more distant, as if she were being borne away from the camp.

That she could be running away of her own volition seemed most improbable.

Bertha had uttered no outcry. But there were other cries—yells, rather—from the Indians, and the rustle of rapidly running footsteps.

"It's getting pretty hot!" muttered Buffalo Bill, as he paused an instant to listen.

"And I don't understand it. Thunder!"

The last exclamation was elicited at the sight of several Indians running in a direction which would bring them right across his path.

He pulled up short as he had started to run again, but the redskins were upon him, and there was no dodging a fight.

But the scout went into it on the whirlwind schedule, and so many things happened to the redskins all in a minute they could never have told the story of the scrimmage had they been given the opportunity to do so.

Two were stretched out on the dead leaves under swift, unexpected slashes from the scout's hunting knife. A third merely received the scout's fist with smashing force between the eyes. A fourth was kicked in the stomach with such painful effect that he went to the earth and writhed and howled with pain.

Two others did not stop to put up a fight of any kind, for it seemed to them that their comrades were being literally mowed down by their terrible assailant. They did not have a chance to see his face, but the swiftness and fatal effect with which he pitched into them touched their superstitious fears, and they dared not resist what seemed to be certain defeat.

The border king did not wait to see if those upon whom he had inflicted the minor hurts got to their legs again, but ran, with little attempt at caution, toward the sudden disappearance of one of the captives.

He found that the guards had taken Bertha back toward the middle of the camp, while there was nothing to be seen of Mrs. Floyd.

"And where's Cale Brant?"

Buffalo Bill asked himself the question, and the next moment set about searching for an explanation of the sudden disappearance of one of the captives.

He found the trail of some one who had recently fled from that end of the camp. But the footprints could not have been made by the woman.

If the Indians had gone in pursuit—which was doubtful, as it appeared that those whom the scout had en-

countered had been the ones who were sent upon the chase—they had at least taken no pains to follow in the footsteps of the fugitive.

The scout followed the tracks until he was brought to a halt in a most startling manner.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MYSTERY OF CALE BRANT.

The spot where the Indians were encamped was quite level. And it was the only level place in that vicinity—the only spot, in fact, where a camp could have been comfortably pitched for so large a party.

The tracks of the one who had, apparently, taken Mrs. Floyd away from the Indian camp, led up a steep ascent, which it would have winded any man to have attempted to climb at a rapid pace. Yet, by the appearance of the tracks, it was evident that the one who made them kept on at a pace which was almost a run, while there was no doubt but that he carried the young woman in his arms, at that.

Climbing the steep ascent as fast as he could run under those conditions, Buffalo Bill came to a spot where there were no trees and but a scanty growth of shrubbery.

Finding that the trail followed an almost perfectly straight line, the scout did not keep his eyes on the trail constantly, glancing at it occasionally, to make sure that he was going right.

Suddenly the hard, chalky surface over which he was toiling seemed to crumble away from under his feet.

He flung himself forward for self-preservation, as he would have done were he on a sheet of ice which was breaking.

But, quick as he was, such a large section of the brittle surface gave way under him that he could not save himself.

He dropped down through the opening, catching and clawing at the sides, yet obtaining no hold that in the least checked the speed of his descent.

He brought up solidly enough on a surface which was by no means a yielding one. But he was nimble and in perfect physical health, and was none the worse for the fall, except that for a moment it was difficult to regain his breath.

As he struck, he was conscious of a bright light that flashed in his eyes. The momentary impression was that the shock of his fall had made him "see stars." But the next moment, as he regained his feet, he saw that the light came from a flaming torch stuck into a crevice in the rocks.

Then he felt a hand on his shoulder, and a voice which he recognized spoke close to his ear.

"You came by a rather short cut, Mr. Cody," said the voice. "But it is all right, and I'm mighty glad that you're here!"

The scout wheeled like lightning, and the next instant the one who had spoken found himself looking into the muzzle of a revolver.

But the countenance of the other did not change, nor did he attempt to withdraw from the weapon which almost touched his nose.

"Cale Brant!" the scout fairly gasped.

"Got it right," said the half-breed, just the flicker of a smile crossing his lips.

"Traitor, eh?" growled the border king.

"Do you feel sure of it?" the other returned, his eyes meeting those of the scout in a way which not many guilty men could have persisted in.

"Looks that way, when you disappeared from the steamer with the two young women the way you did, and I see you next enjoying your liberty among the redskins, while they have the women tied up as captives, awaiting Heaven only knows what fate."

"So you saw me at liberty in the redskin camp?"

"Of course I saw you. Did you expect I should allow the boat to go on without an attempt to rescue the ladies?"

"No, I didn't expect it, and that is why I had some hopes that you would get around in time to help me in the game I had to play."

"In the game you had to play?"

"That is what I said."

"I wish you would quit talking in puzzles, Brant, and tell me plainly what you're driving at."

"I enlisted with you at Bismarck as a member of your River Rovers, didn't I?"

"Yes, and then deserted—"

"Not so fast, Cody. Perhaps I knew what I was doing, and I may have a good motive in it."

"Then explain yourself."

"Notice the condition of my clothes?"

"You've been in the water—in the Missouri, for you are plastered over with mud."

"I swam ashore. In the midst of the fight on the boat, when the deck swarmed with redskins, a half dozen of them got a glimpse of Miss Hallam and the soldier's wife just as they were looking out of the cabin to see how the battle was going."

"The next minute the Indians made a dash for them, and in a flash had the women over the side of the steamer into one of their boats."

"It was just then that you must have come aboard, I suppose, though I didn't see you. I was fighting my way through the redskin crowd to get to the rail, so I could take a hand in saving the young women. I got to the rail at last, and while the others were fighting tooth and nail I jumped overboard. I struck in the water just as the Indians' boat was starting for the shore. I splashed through the muddy water and succeeded in getting a hand hold of the stern of their boat, so that, as they rowed toward the shore they dragged me along at the same time. It was so pitch dark there that they didn't see me, so I got ashore at about the same time that they did."

"Then I came out of the water and told them that I wanted to desert you and join them. I told them the biggest yarn about your forcing me to join your gang with a gun against my teeth."

"They were the more ready to swallow the yarn because they knew me by sight. I was a member of their camp for more than two years, at a time when they were at peace with the whites. I didn't leave them on account of any trouble, and when I told them to-night that I joined you just to play the spy, the yarn was so probable that they believed in."

"That is why they let me go about at liberty as I pleased. I went out of their camps a while ago, pretending that I wanted to try if I could glimpse the steamer on the river."

"When I was up this way a year or two ago I had occasion to wander about by myself considerable. Why, it doesn't matter just now."

Brant fell silent, and Buffalo Bill prompted him.

"Finish the yarn," said the scout, and the other resumed.

"Wandering about here alone, as I have said, I ran across this retreat. It is a natural cave among the chalk-like rocks. The entrance is so hidden that no one ever found it yet, to my knowledge. You broke through a thin place in the chalky rock that covers the cave like a shell."

"It has been caving in here for a year or two, I should say, and somebody was bound to break through sooner or later."

Buffalo Bill had put up his gun.

It is known to the reader how reluctant the scout had been from the first to believe that Cale Brant was a traitor. Even the evidence of his own eyes did not fully convince him; and now that an explanation had been made he did not hesitate to credit every word of it.

"You just ran out of the camp with one of the prisoners, didn't you, Brant?" Cody asked.

"Yes."

"Where is she?"

"Out yonder. I couldn't convince her that I did it for her safety—she's bound to believe that I'm more dangerous than the Injuns that I took her away from."

"How did it happen that you saved her instead of Miss Hallam?"

"There wasn't any time to argue the case, and Miss

Hallam gave me to understand that she wanted me to take the other."

"I don't see how you managed it, with the guards right there."

"It happened right, and I was on the watch for the chance. Red Cloud, the chief, with a number of others, joined the encampment just then, and he sent some kind of an order to the guards of the young women. That took their attention just long enough for me to grab Mrs. Floyd and make off. But they found it out quick enough, and it took a tough chase for me to get up here."

"They'll follow, and find the place."

"Now that you've broken that place through, they probably will. But I gained something, and now I've proved that I ain't a traitor."

"You've proved that you're no traitor, Brant. But the other girl—Bertha Hallam—she has got to be taken out of the clutches of that crew, and it can't be done too quick. Show me the way to Mrs. Floyd, so that I can assure her that she has nothing to fear from you."

Brant complied with this request.

CHAPTER XIII.

BERTHA'S BRAVERY.

Bertha Hallam was a remarkable girl, with one of those natures which a man can never understand, even though it is always fascinating pleasure to attempt to do so.

From the moment that she had first found herself a prisoner among the Sioux, she betrayed no sign of actual fear. It was not the first time that she had been captured by Indians, and she was quite familiar with their customs and cruelty. At the same time, she was fully alive to the danger which such a captivity involved.

"But I won't be with them long!" was her thought, even before she knew that Cale Brant was at work for her interest.

When she found that he had followed her captors ashore, and that he seemed to be on friendly terms with them, she was a little in doubt about his motives at first.

She knew more about his character and history, as may have been inferred, than did any one else in Buffalo Bill's party. She knew that he had once been a member of a hostile party of Indians and renegades against whom the great scout had conducted an expedition.

In that affair, Brant had taken no part in the resistance which was made, and some of Buffalo Bill's men had taken him a prisoner.

He had seen Bertha Hallam soon after, and, attracted by her sweetness of face and airs, had told her his story, which was one of misfortune and injustice rather than of crime.

The occurrence which had first sent him into a lawless career had been a quarrel, in which he had struck down a rather popular man in a border town. The man had been to blame, but the terrible temper of Brant had carried him further in the fight than he would have gone had he acted under a cooler impulse.

The man whom he had struck did not die from the blow, but he had never fairly recovered from it, and his popularity caused some of his friends to seek vengeance. So, for a time, Cale Brant became a hunted man. But that matter was gradually forgotten, and at the time this story begins Brant returned to his old haunts in the vicinity of Bismarck.

It happened that when Buffalo Bill was enlisting his crew of River Rovers, Cale Brant presented himself as a volunteer. The border king was favorably impressed by his appearance, and accepted him, although he knew very little about him. When it turned out that Bertha Hallam knew the man, and that she spoke favorably of him, Buffalo Bill's confidence became complete.

Yet Bertha was not quite so sure of the man's reliability as she tried to appear, on account of one fault which she knew was at the bottom of the principal trouble that Brant had had. This was his temper. She knew that to be practically uncontrollable when it was once aroused.

This explains the talks which she had with him on board of the steamer.

The fact, too, that his past history was known to her

done, and the fear that a general knowledge of it might lead to him the confidence of Buffalo Bill, made up the major part of the secret which excited the suspicions of Pawnee Bill and Philip Ross.

When Brant appeared and would have rescued Bertha from her captors, the girl promptly refused to accept the service if Mrs. Floyd were to be left in captivity.

She knew that the bride was suffering more from the terror of her situation than she was herself. There was not a moment to spare for discussion. The Indian guards knew that Brant was there, and speaking to one of their captives, but they were at the moment listening to the sounds of the new arrivals in the camp, and, as they did not look for treachery on the part of Brant, they paid but little attention to what he was doing.

Then, as Brant seized Mrs. Floyd to bear her away from the camp, she let out a scream of terror. She did not understand that he was trying to do her a friendly act, and, therefore, made as much fuss over it as she would have done had she been seized by one of the hostiles.

This compelled Brant to place a hand over her mouth, and to use considerable roughness to hold her from squirming out of his arms. So, in the glimpse of them obtained by the Indian guards, it did not appear that the half-breed was showing the captive any kindness.

For that reason, they inferred that Brant may have been carrying the young woman away in response to some order received from the chief, and so they did not immediately attempt to interfere.

This gave the half-breed an excellent, although it was a brief, start.

But the Indians soon woke up to the real situation, and then the chase began, while at the same time one of the warriors grabbed Bertha Hallam and ran with her into the middle of the Indian encampment.

At first she feared the worst consequences to herself as a revenge for the escape of her companion in captivity. But, whatever might have been the purpose of the warriors if left to themselves, a word from Red Cloud made them release her, having placed her in a spot from which it would seem unlikely that she should even make an attempt to escape.

But the girl was by no means hopeless. On the contrary, she felt confident that Buffalo Bill would soon find a way to obtain her release. For, she argued, had he not dropped that scrap of ribbon into her lap, as a sign that he was at hand, and watching for a chance to serve her?

She had thrust the souvenir into the bosom of her tunic as a treasure, and she thought that the great scout had kept the trifle which she had given him in jest gave her a feeling of new pleasure.

Could Philip Ross have known her feelings toward the border king, he would not have been puzzled to account for her continual indifference to the affection which he had shown for her.

Could Buffalo Bill himself have known her sentiment, it is hard to say how he would have regarded the matter.

The great scout was too chivalrous and honorable to trifle with the heart of a woman. Yet he was not insensible to preference of that kind.

For a time after Bertha had been taken into the middle of the big encampment very little attention was paid to her by any of the Indians.

Several had been sent in pursuit of the half-breed, whom it was now understood had acted a part which was unfriendly to the redskins.

Red Cloud, meanwhile, was holding a conference with the minor chiefs in the party.

There seemed to be considerable difference of opinion as to the future course of action, and, although Bertha could not understand all that was said, she gathered that they were debating a plan of attack on the steamer that should insure its surrender.

Red Cloud insisted that their only chance was to make sure of the capture while they might be shielded by the darkness of the night. There was no time to lose if they would succeed, as the early dawn of the spring morning was approaching apace.

Bertha became anxious for the safety of the friends

on the steamer as she comprehended that the Indians were deciding on another attack. She wondered if they were as alertly on their guard as they would have been if Buffalo Bill had been with them.

Then she remembered that Pawnee Bill was probably on the steamer, and she was sure that he would not be heedless of any signs of danger from the wily redskins.

She did not know but Ross was there also, and in her anxiety for his safety it was plain that she was not entirely indifferent to him.

A resolution formed in the mind of the girl.

"I believe that I can escape unaided, and I will make a try for it!" she whispered to herself.

CHAPTER XIV.

A CLOSE PINCH.

As before stated, the hands of the two captives had not been bound, the binding of their ankles having been deemed sufficient, under the circumstances, to guard against escape.

The numbers of the Indians were so heavy that they were somewhat overconfident.

Bertha, having resolved to make an attempt to escape on her own account, watched for a chance to try the knots that bound her ankles. She had been seated on a blanket, and she drew the end of this up over her feet so that she might work on the knots unobserved. But she found that it was no simple matter to untie them.

After working until her fingers ached with the strain, she bethought herself of a small knife which she carried in a pocket of her tunic. It was not a weapon, and was too small to have been effective in self-defense, so it had been overlooked when the Indians had disarmed her.

She managed to get the knife out and opened the blade. She had to work with discouraging slowness. She leaned her back against a tree, closed her eyes, and pretended to fall into a doze. This caused the Indians, who were near her, to relax their vigilance somewhat, and in a short time she succeeded in sawing the leather thongs apart with the tiny blade.

Her feet were free!

She rubbed her ankles to restore the circulation, and then relapsed into inactivity.

At last she saw Red Cloud and fully a hundred of the warriors rise and file out of the camp, going in the direction of the river. This reduced the number of the Indians in the camp so greatly that only two of the guards were left in immediate proximity to the captive.

There were still many Indians in the encampment, but they were in positions from which they could not observe the movements of the prisoner.

The guards watched her for a while, and then settled themselves for a doze. Before doing so, however, one of them tied a thong to the wrist of Bertha and attached the other end of the same leather to his own arm.

He now felt sure that she could not make any decided movement without his being aroused. But he did not know that she possessed the little knife, or that her ankles were already free.

Bertha had to wait with all the patience she could command until the savage had relapsed into slumber. Even then she knew that he would be easily aroused, for ordinarily an Indian is a light sleeper.

Any unusual sound, even if it be no louder than that caused by the fall of a leaf, will usually arouse a Sioux warrior from sleep, unless he has been drinking liquor.

Bertha slowly moved the knife to the thong that bound her left arm to that of her guard.

She allowed the rope to hang slack, and worked on it with the dull little blade. At first it seemed like a hopeless task. Yet, after an incision had once been made, the rest was comparatively easy. The thong was severed, and the end fell to the ground. Its weight, being shifted, was felt by the Indian, and he started from his slumber sufficiently to raise his wrist and glare at it for an instant. But the loop around his arm was intact, and a glance at the captive showed him that she was apparently asleep. In the semidarkness he did not see the end of the thong hanging loose on the ground where it had dropped from the wrist of the prisoner.

Bertha had to wait again until she was assured that her guard was sleeping soundly. Then she slowly and noiselessly began to creep away from the camp, hardly daring to breathe for fear that she should betray herself by some sound to her captors.

Not until she had reached the shadows of the denser growth of trees on the outskirts of the encampment did she venture to rise to her feet. By this time the hour lacked but a brief space to the dawn of a new day.

No sounds of an attack on the steamboat had yet been heard, and if there had been such an attack Bertha could have hardly failed to hear the firing at that distance.

Before Bertha had left the encampment entirely out of sight, she paused once more to glance backward. As she did so, her gaze became riveted on a stealthily moving figure between herself and the dull glow sent out by the camp fire.

She scarcely restrained an exclamation of amazement. "That is Buffalo Bill!" she breathed.

She saw him creep up to the spot where she had half reclined, where he paused and evidently examined the severed thongs which had dropped from her ankles, and, likewise, the one which was still attached to the arm of the redskin.

Then, to her amazement, she saw the scout bend over the sleeping guard and suddenly seize him by the throat. One hand gripped the throat of the savage in a clasp that would not allow of the utterance of even a gasp, and at the same time the other hand of the scout brought down a hunting knife with a blow that insured the enduring silence of the Indian.

There was no struggle, and so silently was it all accomplished that the other guard, who was asleep only a few yards distant, was not aroused.

Then Buffalo Bill bent over the trail which Bertha had made, his face almost touching the ground in the closeness of his scrutiny.

He found the trail, and in another moment was following it with a speed and silence that showed with what certainty he was able to read every sign. As he came up with Bertha, he seized her hand and led her swiftly away from the spot without a word being exchanged until they were ascending the slope toward the hiding place where they were being awaited by Cale Brant and Mrs. Floyd.

"So you were sharp enough to get away before I could get to you, Miss Bertha?" the scout then exclaimed, in a low voice.

"I got tired of waiting!" she said, smiling, but without meeting his eyes.

"How did you manage to do it?"

She briefly explained the manner in which she had obtained her liberty.

"You have done what many old scouts of the border would have failed in, under the same conditions. You have got more nerve, more wit, more wisdom, in certain directions, than any one else of your sex that I have ever known."

The cheeks of Bertha grew bright and beautiful under his praise.

"One will do her best to save her life and liberty," she murmured.

"What would you have done if I had not been at hand as you got clear of the camp?"

"I should have gotten a good distance away from the Indian camp and then waited for you to find me. I should have left a trail, and I knew you would follow that."

"That is pretty certain. But the reds would have followed it, too. I reckon it is lucky that I found you as I did."

"You told me that you were near, you know."

"Yes, with the bit of ribbon."

"Queer that you should have kept that silly thing," said the girl, in a low voice.

"Queer that you should have remembered it the moment it fell under your eyes."

"It was formerly my property, so, of course, I would remember."

"Then you touched your lips to it on that account?"

"I will never say why I did that silly thing!" laughed Bertha Hallam.

Just then a wild chorus of Indian yells broke on the air!

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

"Your escape has been discovered!" exclaimed Buffalo Bill.

"And the body of the guard that you killed," added Bertha.

The yelling was kept up without cessation for fully fifteen minutes, until the whole region seemed to be aquiver with the wild chorus.

The scout, in taking his companion toward the retreat where Brant was waiting for them, made a short detour which took them to the spot where he had left Floyd and Ross some time before.

He found them faithfully awaiting his return, as he had bidden them, although the hideous yelling of the last few minutes had made Ross decide to make a change of base at once, unless the scout should immediately put in an appearance.

Ross caught the hand of Bertha when he saw that she was with the border king, and, without waiting to see how she would receive the demonstration, he drew her quickly toward him and touched his lips to her cheek.

"I won't let you get away from me in this fashion again in a hurry, Bertha!" he exclaimed, his voice trembling with earnestness.

Her face flushed a little, and she trembled with the sudden realization of the love which this young man bore for her. But she did not speak, nor did she try to withdraw from him as he drew her arm within his own, and Buffalo Bill ordered them to follow him as fast as they could.

Floyd kept close to the scout, who, in low tones, told him of the rescue of the young wife by the supposed traitor, Cale Brant.

On their way to the retreat, where the half-breed was awaiting them, Bertha and the king of the border hurriedly told their companions all they knew of the history of Cale Brant.

Bertha's part in the narration was as much of a surprise to Buffalo Bill as it was to Ross and Floyd. There could no longer linger in their minds the shadow of a doubt as to the loyalty of the strangely morose but brave fighter, Cale Brant.

They found the latter somewhat anxious, for he wished to get back to the river, according to the program which Buffalo Bill had laid down before he went back to effect the liberation of Bertha.

The reunion of the young soldier and his bride was of the sort which might be expected under the trying circumstances of their terrible, though brief, separation.

"Now we'll make back tracks for the river while we can be shielded somewhat by the darkness," said the scout.

"But how can we get any farther?" queried Ross.

"We have got to take some chances, but I shall signal in a way that Captain Clews and Pawnee Bill will understand, and I reckon they'll manage to get at us somehow."

"The only puzzle will be to keep out of the way of the redskins until we can be shifted to the deck of the steamer. All hands must follow me close, stand by me, and keep your mouths shut, without murmuring, and have faith in the outcome. That is what will carry one through a hard pinch. I'll lead and scheme, but the rest of you will have to furnish your own nerve and patience."

The scout laid out a course which called for a wide detour, and traversing over some rough ground where no trail that could be followed would be left.

When they at last came in sight of the river, day was breaking.

The first object that met their view was *The Swan* slowing steaming up the turbid river at a point almost opposite the spot where the fugitives had reached the shore.

From the lips of Buffalo Bill sounded the harsh call

Ted Strong's Surprise; Or, A Duel in the Clouds.

By EDWARD C. TAYLOR.

(This interesting story began in NEW BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY No. 343. If you have not read the opening chapters get the back numbers which you have missed from your news dealer. If he cannot supply you with them the publishers will do so.)

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE AIRSHIP.

When Ted came down to the hotel rotunda the next morning a young fellow stepped up to him and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Do you remember me?" he asked, smiling at Ted, who looked at him attentively for a moment or two.

"I certainly do," cried Ted, "although it's been several years since I saw you. You're Roy Bennington. You sailed on an airship at the St. Louis World's Fair and rode circles in the air around the Flatiron Building in New York."

"And your exploits as ranch manager, cattleman, miner, and chaser of criminals are well known to me," said young Bennington, looking admiringly at the young roughrider.

"What has become of your airship?" asked Ted.

"It's right here in Cheyenne," said Bennington. "I am taking it to San Francisco, and stopped off for a few days. How do you happen to be here?"

Ted told Bennington all about the train holdup between Benton and Morgan and the other incidents leading up to the escape of Cuddy-Paw.

"Say, that's interesting and exciting," cried Bennington. "It beats sky sailing all to pieces for fun."

"Better come along, then."

"All right. How and when are you going?"

"This morning, on horseback."

"Have you far to go?"

"It may be only ten miles, but it may be a hundred. You never can tell until you hit the trail."

Bennington looked thoughtful for a moment. "Say, Ted," he said, at last, "what's the matter with doing it in the airship?"

"What?" laughed Ted. "I'm more used to the hurricane deck of a broncho than a ship, either of air or water. Is it safe?"

"Both safer and surer than a broncho," said Bennington earnestly. "Tell you what we'll do! Let's rig up the *Dart* and try her. If you like her, she's at your service."

They soon had the airship out of the warehouse, and Roy rigged up a gas generator and inflated the gas bag, a great tan-colored, cigar-shaped silk balloon. The framework of the ship was made of bamboo and steel, and was very light. For power the *Dart* carried a small motor, which operated a propeller, the blades of which were made of cloth. This was soon attached to the gas bag.

"Will she carry three?" asked Ted.

"Like a stagecoach," said Roy.

"Then we're off. I want to take Clay Whipple, a new member of the young roughriders, with us. I will need him, for you will be too busy looking after the *Dart* to do much fighting."

Bud was to follow Cuddy-Paw's trail of the night before on his horse.

Ted swung a pair of powerful field glasses from his shoulder and buckled his revolver and a few rounds of cartridges around his waist.

They entered the car of the *Dart*, and Roy shouted:

"Let her go!"

The ropes were cast off and the earth began to fall away from beneath them, and Ted experienced the most remarkable sensation of his life.

Up, up, went the *Dart*, until houses and trees became mere gray blocks or green specks.

"We are about one thousand feet high," said Roy. "What direction shall we take?"

"Southeast," answered Ted, who, as soon as he became accustomed to looking down, began to enjoy the movement, the freedom, and the swift sweep of the wind.

THE END.

GREEN AS GRASS.

"Buffalo Bill Besieged; or, Pawnee Bill at Flamingo," is the title of the next story that will appear in this weekly. This story shifts the scene of the exploits of Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill to a mining camp, where they play a lightning game against a rough crowd. The daring rescue of a young mining boss from a cyanide tank, with some back-hand shooting, and a host of other adventures, keep the reader thrilled from start to finish. This issue is No. 346, and it will be out April 26th. There will also be an installment of Edward C. Taylor's grand serial, and feature news from every part of the world.

"I heard you had a cow for sale," began the lady who had just moved out from the city, "and as I'm thinking of buying one I—"

"Waal," interrupted the farmer, "thar's that Jersey. Thar's one good pint in her that—"

"Oh, gracious! That would never do; I'd need a quart at least," exclaimed the lady.

Roy gave the rudder ropes a pull, and the *Dart* swung around gracefully. The propeller wheels began to fan the air in swift revolutions. The forward motion of the ship was not perceptible, but on looking down upon the earth Ted saw that they were eating up space at a great rate.

Ted and Clay, leaning over the rail, watched the State of Wyoming slipping along beneath them. Far below they saw a little clearing in the woods, from which rose a white plume. Soon Ted had made this out to be smoke. Some one had been camping there, but had gone, as he could see no other evidences of human occupancy.

"Drop her down a little, Roy," said Ted, "we are too high to see things plainly."

Roy adjusted the steering apparatus, and the *Dart* suddenly dived downward by the head. The earth seemed to rise up at them, and the sinking motion almost took their breath away. Clay gave frequent yelps of joy.

In the clearing over which they hung they saw an oblong yellow object lying on the ground. It excited Ted's curiosity.

"Lower the *Dart* a little more, Roy," he said.

Roy sunk the airship to within two hundred feet of the earth.

"Great Scott! it's a long box of new pine boards."

"We'll drop to the ground and examine it," said Roy. "Stand by to jump out and secure the *Dart* when we touch."

Down swooped the airship, and Ted and Clay leaped out and caught the trailing ropes and held her.

"It's a coffin box," Ted shouted. "The very one we carried out of the express car at Allen the other night. See, it is marked for Allen. What does it mean?"

The earth and grass around the camp fire were trampled as by several persons, and there were hoofmarks and wagon tracks.

Ted stooped and picked out of the trampled ground a shining, new twenty-dollar gold piece.

It was plain to him now. He had helped robbers lift his own money out of the express car in this very coffin.

Wagon tracks ran off toward the west; the trail of a horse took off to the south. The express robbers had divided the money here and then gone their separate ways.

Cuddy-Paw was headed for this place when they lost him in the dark last night.

Bud had been following Cuddy-Paw's trail, and now rode into the clearing. He examined the tracks about the deserted camp and arrived at the same conclusion as Ted.

"Take the trail made by the horse, Bud," said Ted. "while we go up in the air and look for the wagon."

The boys laughed, and Ted explained that they would search the earth for it from on high.

"One man went on horseback, while several went in the wagon. The bulk of the money is with them. We will keep you in sight, Bud," said Ted.

As Ted and Clay jumped into the airship Bud galloped off toward the south.

The *Dart*, with her nose pointed upward at an angle of twenty-five degrees, shot into the air with the two young roughriders clinging to the rails, while Roy directed her movements.

When they reached an elevation of about one thousand feet, the *Dart* began to sail about in wide circles, swooping like an enormous buzzard, while Ted and Clay swept the earth with their field glasses.

"What's that white thing off to the west?" asked Clay. "There! Coming out of that strip of woods!"

Ted turned his binoculars in that direction.

"It's the wagon," he said. "Chase it!"

The *Dart* flew through the air, across the wind, making the speed of an automobile.

The wagon was moving along in the most erratic manner. Evidently no one was guiding the horses.

"It may be an ambush," said Roy warningly, "full of armed men."

"We'll never find out unless we drop down to it," said Ted.

The *Dart* swooped to earth behind the wagon, Ted and Clay in the bow, revolvers in their hands. No sign of life came from it.

When the *Dart* touched ground the boys sprang out and ran toward the wagon with their revolvers ready for use.

Sitting in the back of it was a little man, his head in his arms, sobbing violently. It was the same one who had wept for his coffin at Allen. But the voice and sobs were those of a woman.

"What's the matter?" demanded Ted.

A tear-stained and pathetic face was lifted to him. She no longer wore the fierce black mustache. It was that of a rather pretty young woman.

"Why are you crying?" asked Ted.

"My husband is gone to follow the man who cheated him out of the money he stole," wailed the little woman. "He will be killed."

"Calm yourself," said Ted, "and tell me all about it."

"My husband's name is Chester," she said. "He was the express messenger, but was about to lose his position because he gambled. He learned that a large sum of money was going to come through on his run, and made me ship an empty coffin in his car at Green River, to be claimed by me at Allen, which I did after a lot of trouble. We were to drive south into the Rocky Mountains and hide for a while, then travel overland into Mexico. I didn't want to do it, but he made me."

Ted saw through the express messenger's plot now, and Cuddy-Paw's failure, and wondered why he had not done so sooner. Flora McAlpine was right, after all, in her judgment of the little man.

"Well?" said Ted.

"Last night in camp I was fixing the money so that we could carry it easier, when a young man appeared—"

She stopped and looked at Ted searchingly.

"Why, he looked like you!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, I know him," said Ted, nodding. "Cuddy-Paw. We are looking for him now. What did he do?"

The little woman told Ted how the desperate young bandit had cheated her husband out of the money and cast them adrift.

After she had released her husband's bonds he left her to go back to get his money from Cuddy-Paw, or die in doing so.

Ted advised the poor woman to turn around and drive back to civilization. His goal was wherever Cuddy-Paw could be found.

CHAPTER XII.

AIRSHIP AND MOTOR BOAT.

The *Dart* was turned to the southeast, over the way it had come.

As it flew along they could see from their elevation a broad silver ribbon winding through the carpet of green plains bordered by verdant hills. It was the Platte River, and running into it through the south was a narrower ribbon of water which opened out occasionally, like a string of silver medallions. This was Sandy Bottom Creek and its series of little lakes.

Their course now took them in the direction in which Cuddy-Paw had fled. Roy wished to get into the con- stratum of air that hung above the water, as the rays of the sun were expanding the gas in the balloon too rapidly, and he steered for Sandy Bottom Creek.

They were all exclaiming at the beauty of the scene beneath them, and were passing over one of the larger of the lakes, when Ted uttered an exclamation of astonish- ment.

Like a ball from a rifle, a long black boat shot out from the shadow of a cave that opened like a door in the high bank of the lake.

Simultaneously a yell came faintly up to them. They looked down and saw Bud Morgan galloping along the bank of the lake, following the boat.

They heard a slight popping noise. A puff of smoke floated above Bud's head. He was firing at the boat.

The motor boat, for such they now distinguished it, was running at high speed, throwing the water high from its bows.

With his field glasses Ted could see that it held three men. One was in the bow, handling the machinery. A second was sitting amidships with a Winchester in his hands. The third was in the stern, engaged in steering.

As it darted out toward the middle of the lake the man with the Winchester raised it to his shoulder and fired.

Ted saw Bud's horse rear high and fall over. Bud scrambled to his feet and began firing at the boat again. "Down with her!" shouted Ted. "Steer for Bud!"

The *Dart* swooped down. As it passed him Bud grasped the rope that trailed from its stern. He was swept off his feet in an instant. The *Dart* tossed about perilously as Bud's weight was added to it, and Ted was almost thrown out.

"Now steer for the boat!" yelled Ted, grasping the rail.

He had an idea, and wondered if the same had entered Bud's head, or if he would comprehend it when the time came.

The *Dart* swung around in a graceful circle and dashed off in the direction of the boat. Bud's body was swinging at the end of the rope, a few feet above the surface of the water.

The man amidships of the motorboat fired at him repeatedly with his Winchester, but Bud's swinging body made a poor target and the bullets went wide.

Bud evidently knew now what Ted expected of him, for he looked up and yelled. Ted could not understand what he said, but nodded his head and pointed to the boat.

The airship swung in close to the motorboat, which was moving slowly.

Ted chuckled as he thought of the remarkable situation. Nothing like it had ever happened in the West—train robbers trying to escape in a motor boat, pursued by cowboys in an airship.

As the *Dart* swung close to the motor boat Ted could read its name painted on the bow. It was the *Tarantula*.

Suddenly the *Dart* leaped up and shot forward. Ted, looking over the side, saw the cause of the change in its direction.

Bud had let go the rope and had fallen into the *Tarantula*. He landed on the body of the man amidships, in whom, as he looked up, Ted recognized Cuddy-Paw.

But as the *Dart* leaped upward and onward, Roy who was leaning over the stern adjusting a rope, fell headforemost into space.

His body whirled over and over several times in falling, and he disappeared into the lake in a fountain of spray.

Ted was watching Bud through his glasses with breathless interest. He was not aware that Roy was gone until warned by a cry of alarm from Clay.

When he looked, Roy had come to the surface and was swimming rapidly toward the shore.

The *Dart*, without helmsman or engineer, began to act erratically. Neither Ted nor Clay knew how to manage her, and she went on a rampage, swinging about in the wind with the rudder flapping and the gas bag tipping dangerously. All the while the propellers were driving her, but she had no steerage way, and she cut figure eights and circles and ovals as she willed. The wind, blowing across the quarter in which the *Tarantula* was skipping over the water, kept the *Dart* away from the motor boat. And Bud, far from being able to assist Ted and Clay, was having the fight of his life and for his life.

Ted sprang toward the steering gear. He did not understand the confusion of ropes, and his efforts sent the *Dart* flying even farther from her goal, the motor boat.

But suddenly the wind took the matter out of his hands. It turned the *Dart* in the proper direction, and she fairly hummed forward and passed the *Tarantula*.

"Look at Bud," yelled Clay. "I can't wait for this machine to make a landing. I've got to go!"

A streak of black cut the air as Clay's body shot out of the *Dart* and went down headforemost toward the lake. It was a beautiful dive of more than fifty feet, and he cleaved the water like an arrow. As he came to the surface the *Tarantula* was close upon him, and he threw up his hand and grasped the rail on the port side.

Ted saw him drag himself into the boat, and sent up a shout of joy.

When Bud dropped upon Cuddy-Paw he knocked the breath out of the young villain and pinned him to the bottom of the boat.

But the engineer ran back from his motor and struck him on the back of his head with a wrench. This gave Cuddy-Paw an opportunity to rise, and both jumped on Bud.

Cuddy-Paw was about to crush in Bud's skull with the

butt of his rifle when he was caught around the arms. Clay had climbed unobserved during the fight in time to save Bud.

The man at the steering apparatus had been watching for a chance to fire at Clay or Bud, and was standing in the stern with leveled revolver, waiting for them to stand forth so that he would not wound his own men.

Ted got the knack of handling the *Dart* at last, and she obeyed the rudder ropes in his hands like a horse on the bridle. He had thrown out the anchor, hoping that it would by chance catch in the boat. Now, as it floated over, one of the flukes fastened itself in the belt of the man in the stern and he was suddenly jerked overboard.

As the *Dart* swung around and away from the *Tarantula*, Ted reached over the stern and cut the rope, and the wretch at the end of it plunged into the water and out of sight, with twenty-five pounds of iron attached to him.

There was desperate fighting in the *Tarantula*.

Bud lay in the bottom of the boat with a cracked skull, raving and trying to get to his feet, but as often as he tried he sank back weak and dazed.

Clay Whipple was fighting Cuddy-Paw and the engineer like a demon. He flung them about the boat as if they were children. His long arms swung like the fans of a windmill, and every time his fist struck it left a dent. He had sent the engineer tumbling into his machinery with a well-directed blow in the stomach. But the man came back to attack him again, armed with a heavy brass lever. It was cramped quarters for fighting, and Clay's long figure and big feet required much room.

Cuddy-Paw feinted at Clay's face, then ducked, and, grasping the long Kentuckian about the knees, threw him on his back in the middle of the boat and sprang upon him.

The engineer was hurrying aft with his brass lever when Bud revived somewhat and caught him by the feet, bringing him down.

But Cuddy-Paw, his face distorted with rage, had managed to draw his knife.

This was the situation when Ted swooped down in the *Dart* like an avenging angel upon the *Tarantula*.

As the airship came alongside, the motor boat was running away, controlled only by the lurching of its hull from side to side in response to the struggles going on within it.

Ted sprang aboard and quickly wrapped a rope around one of the seats and gave it a quick hitch, and the *Dart* swung idly in the wind above it.

Cuddy-Paw had raised the knife to strike, when Ted kicked it out of his hand, and, grasping him by the collar, brought him to his feet.

Thus relieved, Clay sprang up. He was just in time to grapple with the engineer, who had raised the lever to bring it down on Ted's skull.

"For the last time," snarled Cuddy-Paw, rushing upon Ted. "This time I will kill you. The world is not big enough to hold us both. We get in each other's way."

Ted did not reply. His eyes were fixed upon Cuddy-Paw's flushed face with calmness and determination, as he awaited the attack.

With all the rapidity and power of a panther, Cuddy-Paw was upon him, struggling for a hold on the throat.

Ted engaged him silently. He felt that he was going to win. For a while they wrestled, neither gaining the advantage.

Suddenly the boat swerved, tipped until the water washed over the gunwhale, and Ted and Cuddy-Paw, locked in a deadly embrace, went overboard.

The lake was deep, and they went down struggling fiercely with one another, each striving for a lock on the throat of the other.

Ted, as the reader well knows, was an expert swimmer. He had practiced holding his breath for a long time under water, in which his superb chest development greatly aided him.

As the green water closed over their heads and the light grew fainter, Cuddy-Paw lost his nerve. He tried to break Ted's hold and get away. But Ted held him closely and took him to the bottom, and held him there.

Cuddy-Paw's struggles grew fainter and fainter, and finally he opened his mouth and took in water, and Ted knew it was all over and that he was the victor.

He grasped Cuddy-Paw firmly by the hair, and, spurning the bottom with his foot, shot up to the top. He was just in time, for he was almost exhausted, and Cuddy-Paw was nearly drowned. Clay and Bud, who had revived somewhat, dragged them aboard, and Ted at once began to resuscitate his vanquished enemy. The engineer lay in the thwarts, bound hand and foot, and eventually this was the fate also of Cuddy-Paw.

Ted found four bags of newly minted gold coins in one of the lockers of the boat.

The fortune from the Blue Butterfly Mine was practically intact.

The airship was towed ashore, from where Roy had watched the fighting in which the young roughriders had been engaged.

The *Dart* made three trips to Cheyenne, first conveying the gold to the bank and Cuddy-Paw back to prison.

That night Ted called on Flora McAlpine, to tell her that her feminine intuition with regard to the real robbers of his forty thousand dollars was right, and he spent the evening in the sheriff's house, uninterrupted by serenaders.

A few days later he and Roy started through the air in the *Dart* toward the Black Mountain Ranch. Clay and Bud went overland, as they said that bronchos and not airships or motor boats were the proper means of transportation for cowboys.

Cuddy-Paw went to the penitentiary, as he richly deserved, with all of his gang, and Ted was saved the inconvenience of again having to run counter to his double.

But this was not the last of Ted Strong's adventures in the *Dart*.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEMON BIRD.

Ted Strong, the leader of the young roughriders, and his friend Roy Bennington were sailing across the western part of Wyoming, on their way from Cheyenne.

The long journey had greatly reduced the amount of gas in the balloon, to which the carriage and the propelling machinery were attached. For this reason the *Dart* was sailing not more than two hundred feet above the surface of the prairie.

From time to time Roy looked up at the balloon with an anxious face.

He was wondering whether the gas would hold out long enough to complete the trip.

From the wicker basket, or car, which Roy had attached to the airship before the start, they had a clear view of the horizon in all directions. Everywhere they looked was the broad, sweeping prairie, studded with rolling hills, cut with deep coulees, and crossed by flashing streams. Here and there were groves of stunted pines, and between lay broad meadows of waving grass in which they occasionally saw large herds of feeding range cattle, attended by cowboys.

Sometimes they passed over these bunches of cattle and the cowboys would look up at the strange thing flying above them, and would start after the *Dart*, yelling and firing their revolvers. When the firing began, Roy would start the elevating propellers and shoot up into the air out of range.

Now, however, so much gas had escaped, and that which remained in the bag had lost so much of its raising power that the *Dart* found it more and more difficult to respond when Roy tried to make her rise, so that whenever he saw a band of cowboys he steered off to one side, to avoid them.

"What's the matter, Roy?" asked Ted. "You seem anxious about something. Anything the matter with the ship?"

"We have lost so much gas that I have begun to wonder whether we will get through with the *Dart*, or whether we will be left out here on the prairie with her. If we could get to some ranch house where they would not take us for some strange sort of bird and try to put bullets through us every time we come in sight, I might be able to rig up a makeshift for a generator, and get some more gas into her. Do you know where we are?"

"I have been looking for landmarks all day," answered Ted, "but up here the earth looks all alike to me. Do you

see that blue haze away off to the northwest? I believe that is the Black Hills, but it is too far off for me to determine yet, even with the field glasses. If I am right, we are crossing the Mandan Indian reservation. If so, we better keep moving, for the Mandans are bad medicine, and if they spot us they will give us the chase of our lives. I had hoped that we would pass over the reservation in the night, then they would be sure not to see us."

"Let us hope we get through all right," said Roy.

"If this is the reservation beneath us," continued Ted, "then the Bar-X-Circle Ranch should be due north, for it is on the edge of the reservation. Colonel Fothergill, its owner, is a friend of mine, and if we reach it safely we can have anything we want."

"Then I wish we were there," said Roy anxiously, "because I am afraid we are not going to last much longer. Sailing at night has cost us a lot of good gas, which we need in our business right now, and will need a great deal more before we can replace it."

"Well, cheer up," said Ted, with a smile. He was so accustomed to meeting and overcoming difficulties that he could not see danger until it had gone past. "Keep her going until she won't go any farther. By that time something will have happened one way or the other."

The *Dart* was beginning to behave badly. She wobbled a good deal, and was carried sideways by every gust of wind, and Roy had to keep the ascending propellers going all the time to keep her head up. This, naturally, reduced the power necessary to drive her ahead, and Roy was shaking his head in despair. He feared the *Dart* had not far to go now.

Ted had crept forward, and was lying on the framework of the ship, searching the horizon for the Fothergill ranch house. He thought he would know it by the grove of cottonwood and catalpa trees with which it was surrounded. The weather was very hazy, and objects on the horizon were not easily distinguished, but he had caught a dark blur close to the sky line in the direction in which the Fothergill house should be, if he was right in his guess.

"I believe I have found the Bar-X-Circle Ranch," he called back to Roy. "If I am correct we are not more than ten or twelve miles away from it. Can you keep up that long?"

"I'll try," answered Roy, "but she's running out mighty fast."

Meantime Ted was carefully searching the surface of the prairie with his field glasses. His attention was suddenly arrested by a moving object on the crest of a hill directly in their path, and not more than a mile or two away. He watched it for several minutes without saying anything, for, if his surmise with regard to it was wrong, he did not want to alarm Roy.

He had seen the feathered topknot of an Indian.

Had the Indian been standing in the open, Ted would have paid no particular attention to him. But a hiding Indian, according to a saying on the plains, is a dangerous Indian, for he means fight or ambush.

As the *Dart* swung closer to the hill, Ted now saw that its crest was covered with savages hiding behind the rocks. Ted crawled back to the wicker car in which Roy was standing, directing the course of the airship, and climbed over its side.

"We're in for it, Roy," said Ted calmly. "There are fifty Indians hidden behind the rocks on the top of that hill in front of us. They are laying for us. Can't you hit up the speed a little, and give them the slip?"

"I'm afraid it is impossible, Ted," answered the aeronaut. "I've been trying to get more speed out of her for the last hour, but instead of going faster she seems to be dropping behind at every revolution of the motor."

"Then we'll have to do the best we can," said Ted. "We'll keep going and run the blockade, for that is what it means. Those fellows with the feathers will probably each take a shot at us before we get beyond range, and if they have their ponies they'll keep after us until they get us."

"If they puncture the gas bag it's all over except the landing," said Roy gloomily. "If we could only ascend a few hundred feet we'd get into a current of air that would carry us along at good speed. Down here it is absolutely dead."

They drifted on slowly, the boys peering over the edge of the wicker car. They could now see the heads of Indians bob up here and there above the rocks evidently to get a glimpse of the airship. Ted had no doubt that every one of them was quaking in his moccasins with fear at the strange sight.

As the *Dart* sailed slowly over the hill crest, up leaped the Indians, yelling like demons. Some of the old men were waving branches, and others were beating tom-toms, or waving white cloths.

"They take the airship for some kind of flying demon," cried Ted. "They are making medicine, trying to drive it away. If they cannot do that they will fire on us. See! They are all armed with bows and arrows. I wonder what that means? It is a good thing they didn't bring their rifles."

"Bows and arrows are bad enough," said Roy. "They may prove worse. An arrow point can tear a larger hole in the gas bag than a bullet."

"Duck!" yelled Ted.

A shower of arrows came whizzing through the air, and passed into and over the *Dart*. It was well for the boys that they had dropped to the bottom of the basket, else they would have been killed.

"Listen!" cried Roy. "They have punctured the gas bag."

A slow, hissing noise came from above, and the airship began to settle slowly. In a moment the hissing became louder, then there was a loud ripping noise, and the boys were almost strangled with gas. A large hole had appeared in the side of the bag, and the gas was escaping rapidly. The *Dart* was coming down like a wounded bird.

"Keep out of sight!" cried Ted, as Roy involuntarily started to rise to examine the rent. "If you show your head you'll get an arrow in it."

The gas was nearly out of the bag by this time, and the *Dart* came down with a rush. As it struck the ground the silk skin of the bag collapsed and fell in folds, imprisoning the boys in the car.

The *Dart*, in falling, had cleared the top of the hill, and landed on the level prairie beyond, and the Indians came swarming down toward it. In a moment or two they had surrounded it, and were yelling and dancing around it like mad, waving their bows and arrows.

Ted and Roy were almost suffocated beneath the heavy folds of the varnished cloth that completely enveloped the car, completely shutting out the air. But at last they managed to shove it from one corner of the car and crawled out.

Ted went out first, and as his feet touched the ground he was grasped by a dozen hands and almost torn to pieces before he had an opportunity to make a fight. At last he managed to free himself and stand apart, breathing heavily from his exertions.

Roy was yelling for help in the midst of a band of yelling savages, and Ted, with a shout, went to his assistance, and succeeded in freeing him.

The Indians now were standing in a circle, gazing at them in amazement, and some of the young braves were gesticulating wildly and talking excitedly.

In the midst of the hubbub an old Indian, with long locks of gray hair hanging in front of his ears, jumped forward and began a harangue.

Ted understood enough of the Mandan tongue to translate what he said for Roy's benefit.

"Men of the Mandan tribe," said the old man, "we have done a great thing this day. We have destroyed the demon bird that the Mandans have been looking for these many generations. Our names will ever be held in reverence by our people. We have caught also the white magicians who travel in the bird which has come again to destroy our people. Them we must kill also. But first we will torture them according to the ways of our tribe."

But this evidently did not suit the young warriors, for they dashed forward with their arrows pointed at the breasts of the boys, and their bows drawn back. Others, armed with knives and tomahawks, sprang in front of them. One of them had seized Ted by the throat and was about to sink his hatchet into his skull.

CHAPTER XIV.

WITH CLAW AND FANG.

"Stop!" A commanding voice delivered this demand in the Mandan language, and the young Indian brave who was about to murder Ted Strong released his grip and slunk away. Roy was also in danger of immediate death, when he, too, was set free.

"What are my brothers doing with the white men?"

The man who asked this question in a cold, deliberate voice was a superb specimen of the Western plains Indian. He was unusually tall, and his head was of the noble cast of the idealized red man of the artists and sculptors. He was dressed after the white man's fashion, except that his clothes were of better quality than those worn by most plainmen. He wore a blue flannel shirt, open at the throat, and a scarlet silk handkerchief was loosely knotted about his neck. On his fine-looking head was a broad-brimmed light felt hat, with the brim turned up in a dashing style.

His drab breeches were fastened around his waist with a broad, silk-webbed belt, which was full of cartridges, and from which hung a silver-mounted revolver, in a holster covered with elk teeth of different shades of color, worked into an intricate design. The holster and his beautifully beaded leggings and moccasins, of the finest smoked buckskin, were the only things of Indian make that he wore. For the rest, he was mounted on a superb black stallion, riding without a saddle, on a blanket of otter skin.

Ted was looking at him in wonder. He knew, at least by reputation, every Indian of note in Wyoming or the Dakotas, but he had never even heard of this noble-looking young Mandan, whom the braves obeyed implicitly, and whose slightest word they seemed to fear.

"Gentlemen," said the young Indian, turning to Ted and Roy, and speaking in perfect and cultured English, "I must apologize for the somewhat abrupt and discourteous conduct of my fellow tribesmen. They are ignorant and uneducated, and know not what they do."

He turned to one of the old men and spoke to him rapidly in his native tongue. The old man came forward and saluted his questioner in a grave manner, after which he began to talk earnestly. The young Indian's lips curled into a smile as he listened. Interrupting the old man with a curt gesture, he looked gravely at Ted, and said:

"I think I can explain this attack upon you, if not to your satisfaction, at least to your sympathies, if you will take into consideration their ignorance. The Mandans, although once a fierce and warlike tribe, are now at peace with your people, and have no occasion now to be otherwise. I see that you have there an airship, which, if I am not mistaken, I saw at the World's Fair. They have never seen one before, and even now do not know what it is, nor would they understand if I tried to explain it to them."

Ted's amazement increased as he listened to the Indian, and he wondered who he could be.

"They saw your airship at a great distance coming toward their reservation. There is a legend among the Mandans that once upon a time, many generations ago, a great bird came out of the south, and in one night destroyed almost the whole tribe. This they still call the 'Demon Bird,' and many tales are told about it. Since then the Mandans have been looking for the bird to return, and every brave warrior is pledged by his very relationship to the tribe to kill it when it should appear, or die in the attempt. My own idea about the 'Demon Bird' is that it was a pestilence that destroyed the tribe, but that the Indians' fancy and their love for the remarkable and for fairy tales are responsible for the legend. When they saw your airship coming they turned out to kill it with their bows and arrows, as, according to the legend, that is the only weapon with which they can destroy it. I am afraid that you cannot repair the balloon out here on the prairie, and if I can have it taken anywhere for you, I will bring a wagon from the agency and have it conveyed there."

"We thank you not only for your timely interference, but for your explanation, which is perfectly satisfactory," said Ted. "I believe we are not far from Colonel Fother-

gill's ranch, and if we could get a wagon to take the airship there we would be glad."

"It shall be here in a short time," said the Indian. He gave an order, and two of the young braves set out at a run. With a wave of his arm and a few words he dismissed the other Indians, who set off toward the west without further parley.

The young Indian descended from his horse, and turned it loose to graze. He came up to Ted with extended hand, saying:

"I am Watunga, son of Chief Swift Wing, who, as you probably know, is a United States prisoner of war at Fort Robinson, in Nebraska. I have just returned to my tribe from Yale, after having been to the Carlisle Indian School."

"I am Ted Strong, and this is Mr. Roy Bennington, an aeronaut, whose machine was wrecked," said Ted.

Roy was looking at Watunga with renewed interest. "Why, you are Braveheart, the great Yale football player, aren't you?" he asked.

The Indian nodded, and, turning to Ted, said: "I have heard of you, I think, back East, and have read of your exploits out West here. I am glad to have met you, and I hope we can be friends."

The three continued to chat until the return of the Indians with the wagon, when the wrecked airship was loaded upon it, and they started, after taking a pleasant leave of Braveheart, as he will be known to our readers.

They drove up to the Fothergill ranch before dark, and were hospitably received by the colonel himself, who was sitting on the broad veranda of the house. A young girl was sitting beside him, and she listened with interest as Ted recounted the adventure with the Mandans.

"Mighty glad you boys came right on here," said the colonel genially. "Bossie, this is Ted Strong. I reckon you have heard of the young roughriders, and this is their leader. The other young gentleman is a sky mariner. Now, you boys sit down and let Bossie tell you how she roped and tied that big Texas steer to-day, while I run out and get that greaser cook of mine to fix up some grub. But you want to look out for him; he's liable to put so much pepper in the food that you'll have to call out the fire department."

"You mustn't mind what dad says about me," said the girl, laughing. "He's that proud of anything I do on the range that he can't keep it to himself. He calls me a cowgirl, and says I can rope and throw a steer better than any man on the place."

She was a tall, slender girl, with fluffy hair, and a sun-burned skin, and plenty of freckles across the bridge of her nose. She had a pair of laughing blue eyes, and very white teeth, which were always showing because she seemed to be always laughing. She was dressed in true cowboy fashion, which she had toned down and made beautiful in a feminine sort of way. She wore a silk waist open at the throat, with a light-blue handkerchief, knotted in cowboy style, and a tan divided skirt. Her feet were incased in a pair of foxskin riding boots, and she carried in her hand a pair of foxskin gauntlets, fringed and beaded, while a quirt hung from her wrist. Around her waist was a belt and holster, in which was an ivory-handled revolver.

While waiting for supper she asked Ted if he would not like to see the corral and the pony herd, and as they sauntered away the old colonel looked after them.

"Fine-looking boy and girl," he said to Roy. "I heard that Ted Strong is a good deal of a cowboy himself, but he'll have to get a good gait on him to keep up with her." The proud father entertained Roy with the remarkable doings of his only and motherless girl.

When Bossie and Ted reached the pony inclosure they were met by a tall, slender, black-eyed young fellow, a little older than Ted, whom Bossie introduced as Jack Bazador, foreman of the horses.

"Jack," she ordered, in the tone of one used to commanding, "bring out 'Fret.' I want Mr. Strong to see him."

The foreman bowed and moved away in a sulky manner, as if he did not like to take orders.

"He's a half-breed," Bossie explained. "Half French and half Piegan Indian. A bad mixture, dad says, but

he is a good horseman, and one of the finest riders on the ranch. But he is sulky, and has a temper as bad as my pet panther, Nero, when he is crossed. Sometimes I am actually afraid of him, he looks at me so strangely. But dad says he is all right, and I guess I can take care of myself."

The half-breed now came up, leading a beautiful horse, which fretted and tossed about, but when Bossie laid her hand on his muzzle he nickered and became as docile as a lamb.

"I am the only one who can ride him," said the girl. "He has almost killed several men, including Jack, here."

The half-breed smiled in a wicked sort of way. He was looking at Ted out of the corner of his eye, with a sneer. Evidently he did not approve of the fast-growing friendship between his young mistress and the young roughrider. He was measuring Ted as an antagonist measures another, although Ted had spoken to him in the free and friendly way that Western men have with one another.

As Ted and Bossie turned to return to the house, Bazador looked after them. "So, it is you, eh, Mr. Ted Strong!" he muttered. "We shall see how long you will last. She is too proud to be the friend of the poor half-breed horse rustler, and she shall not have you, either." The fellow was evidently suffering from a chronic jealousy, and the sight of them together had enraged him.

It was late before supper was over and time for bed, if they were to get the *Dart* repaired and off the next day. Roy had stored the airship in a large barn, and said he would sleep there beside it, to see that it came to no more harm.

Bazador had come to the house, and was talking with the colonel, so that when Bossie was ready to retire, she called to him, and said: "Bazador, show Mr. Strong to his room when he is ready," and stood talking to Ted for several minutes before tripping upstairs.

Bazador was waiting patiently, but with a pale face, and when Ted said he was ready, led off down a hall without speaking.

At the end of the hall Bazador stopped before a door which he unlocked, and said: "You will find matches and a lamp inside." He hastily closed the door before Ted could say good night.

Ted found himself in a dark room. It had a strange smell, and at one end he could see a window, and against the starlit sky iron bars.

He was feeling in his pocket for a match when he heard a peculiar sound. It was a snarl—the snarl of a cat animal, he thought, and looked about in the darkness. In a far corner he saw a pair of luminous green eyes staring at him. He had found a match by this time and struck it. As it flared up, he saw a large mountain panther crouching for a spring. So this was Bossie's pet, he thought, that had a temper as bad as Bazador's. At the same time Ted noticed that the room was without a bed or other furniture.

He quickly extinguished the match, and backed softly toward the door, reaching out his hand behind him for the knob. At last his fingers clutched it, and he turned it and pushed. It was as solid as a rock. The door was locked on the outside.

He saw the green orbs of the panther coming slowly across the room toward him, and sidled down the wall toward the window. He could hear the soft pit-pat of the animal's feet on the floor, and all the while its low, purring growl, like that made by a cat when it is disturbed at its food.

Closer and closer came the beast, until the smell of it was sickening.

The cold chills ran up and down Ted's back. This was a thing he had never faced before.

He heard a noise at the grated window and looked toward it. The evil face of Bazador was pressed against the bars. It disappeared, and Ted heard the echo of a sneering laugh.

Out of the dark two points of fire suddenly shot at him. He knew instantly that the animal had sprung for his throat, and with a movement almost as quick as the panther's, he leaped aside.

But no man is as quick as a cat. The panther's paw struck him on the shoulder and wheeled him around.

He fell upon the beast, which, in striking the wall after its miss, had gone down. In a flash Ted was upon its back. His stony fingers buried themselves in the brute's throat, and he held on to save his life.

Over and over on the floor they rolled, but Ted never loosed his hold. Occasionally he could feel its claws tearing through the tough khaki cloth of his uniform, but as yet the beast had not wounded him. He knew that if it got either claw or fang into him he was gone.

The exertion was almost more than he could endure. He felt that he could not stand it much longer, and that unless help came he would be compelled to let go, and that he would then be torn to pieces by the infuriated panther. It was so enraged that its cries were terrible. It was shrieking like a demon.

Suddenly he felt his hand relax their hold; human endurance was at an end. At the same moment the panther uttered a cry, as if of triumph, and sprang away. In that instant Ted heard a door slam along the hall, and the rush of feet.

The panther sprang, for Ted could see its eyes, like balls of fire, coming straight toward him. He felt the impact of its body, and went down.

A sharp pain shot through his shoulder, and he heard the cloth of his coat rip beneath the razorlike claws, and gave himself up for lost.

A key grated in the lock. A light flashed before his eyes, and the panther sprang away from him and stood crouching and growling.

Bossie Fothergill bounded into the room.

"Back! Back, Nero!" she cried, and sprang upon the animal, beating it in the face with her quirt, while the cowed brute cowered in the corner, whimpering.

The girl turned on Ted. "How did you come in here?" she asked.

"Bazador brought me here," he answered.

"Bazador brought you here!" she cried, in horror.

The colonel stood behind her. "Bazador is a plumb Injun," said the old man.

"Only let me get at him," said Bossie, with something like rage in her voice. "I'll Injun him."

But Ted was not badly hurt, and very grateful to the courageous girl who had arrived in time to save him from the fangs and claws of Nero, her treacherous pet.

CHAPTER XV.

TED WINS FOR THE CHIEF.

By noon of the next day Roy had got the rent in the gas bag of the *Dart* repaired, and had made enough gas in an improvised retort to carry it on its way.

It had been agreed among the people in the ranch house that nothing was to be said about Ted's narrow escape from the panther, and Bazador's attempt to murder him in this fiendishly cruel way. When they came to look for the half-breed he could not be found. He had run away in the night.

"I reckon he has gone back to the Injuns," said the colonel. "It's the best place for him, for if ever I catch him around this ranch again it'll take a whole army ambulance corps to patch him up again."

As Ted and Bossie Fothergill parted they promised to see each other again, and to take rides together on the range.

"You must ride over to Moon Valley some day with your father," said Ted hospitably; "and we'll show you some roughriding stunts. I think you'd like our boys, and I'm sure they'd be tickled to death to meet you."

"I like boys who are brave and can do things, and can ride and shoot and rope cattle. We'll be sure to come," said the girl enthusiastically.

The *Dart* rose gracefully into the air, in response to Roy's manipulation of the levers, and they sailed away into the northeast, where they could see the dark bulk of the Black Hills on the horizon.

About midnight, with the aid of their searchlight, they found Moon Valley, and the ranch house. They were expected, for Ted had telegraphed Ben Tremont how they were coming, and about the time of their arrival, and the boys had built an improvised aerodrome, or airship stable, for the accommodation of the *Dart*.

They sat up until morning listening to Ted's account of his adventures with the train robbers on the Union Pacific, and the trip across in the airship.

Ted spent the next day in the saddle. He went over the entire ranch, inspecting the calves and yearlings. The herd was in fine condition, for the boys who had remained at the ranch prided themselves in keeping everything up to the mark Ted had set for them in the management of the place.

Ted had added a big buffalo bull and two cows to the pet stock on the ranch, and they had contributed to the bunch two little, wabby-legged buffalo calves.

As he was riding along, surrounded by the boys, he said:

"Fellows, what do you say if we add a herd of buffalo to our stock? I don't mean for fun, but for business. We have an ideal place for them right here in the valley, and the climate and grass are just suited to them. The buffalo will soon become extinct if some one does not take hold of the matter in the right way, and save them. I think we can do it."

"We shore can do it if yer say so," remarked Bud Morgan, who, with Clay Whipple, had ridden in from Cheyenne that noon. "All it takes is yore head ter engineer ther deal."

"But where are we to get our start?" asked Kit Summers. "Three buffalo will not increase fast enough to do any good."

"I know where there's a bunch of about thirty out in Montana, that can be bought, and I don't know of a better investment," answered Ted.

"It may be all right," said Ben, "but I can't see where the profit is to come in. The public does not seem to be clamoring for buffalo as much as for chuck steaks and rib roasts from steers off the ranches of the celebrated young roughriders."

"A single buffalo——" began Ted.

"Ter say nothing of a married buffalo," interjected Bud.

"A buffalo," Ted went on, when the laugh subsided, "will produce more profit than a dozen steers, but they are not so certain to breed as cattle, and the loss is proportionately greater. For instance, a buffalo bull, if brought to maturity, is worth about two thousand dollars. You know what a steer will bring. You can figure out the rest for yourselves. A good buffalo head, for ornamental purposes, will bring anywhere from five hundred dollars to one thousand dollars; the pelt, or robe, is worth almost as much as sealskin, and the meat at Christmas time is worth one dollar and fifty cents a pound in the clubs and hotels of New York and Chicago."

"Whew!" whistled Bud Morgan. "An' ter think that I shot them noble animals when I was a leetle kid down in Texas, like they wuz rabbits. I reckon I've shot nigh on ter a million dollars' wuth o' them in my time."

"You'll never do it again," said Ted. "Well, what do you say; do we go into the buffalo-raising business, in addition to cattle?"

"Just as you say," said the boys. "It's up to you."

"Then that's settled," said Ted. "We'll invest some of our Blue Butterfly funds in the business."

That evening as they were sitting in front of the house, listening to the music—Clay Whipple, who had instantly become a prime favorite with the boys, was playing on his fiddle—they saw a man approaching on horseback across the valley.

"Jumpin' sandhills!" exclaimed Bud. "Thar comes a hombre what can ride a hoss ter suit me. An' ther hoss what he's a-ridin' is the kind o' hoss what yer Uncle Hiram Morgan would like ter throw his saddle over."

The rider, who was approaching like a whirlwind, pulled up suddenly about fifty feet away, slid from the back of his black stallion, threw the lines over its head and strode toward the group. In the dusk Ted had not at once recognized him. Now he saw that he was Braveheart, the Indian college man and football player, and at once rose and went forward to greet him.

"I have come to have a talk with you," said Braveheart simply, as they shook hands. "I am troubled about my people. I am alone among them, because of my education. Since I have lived among the white men my views of life have changed. I do not think as the Mandans do. I

want to raise them above themselves if I can. But that is hard. There is no one I can talk with among them, so I have come to you."

"If I can do anything for you I shall be very glad," answered Ted. "I will introduce you to the boys, then we will go into the office and talk."

When they were alone, after the young roughriders had given Braveheart the welcome that was his due, the young Indian said to Ted:

"The Mandans are without a chief. The government officers, who could not trust my father with the leadership of his people, sent me away to be educated, that I might fittingly take his place, and get away from his influence while my impressions were being formed. Since I have been away they have been ruled ostensibly by underchiefs, but all the while my father, from his prison at Fort Robinson, has been in communication with them, and has kept them dissatisfied with their lot. But the most serious part about it is that he is all the time inciting them to go upon the warpath. He confers with them through a secret messenger. If I could find out who this messenger is I could put a stop to it. If I could be proclaimed chief I believe I could raise up my people. The old chief, my father, is for war. I am for peace and prosperity."

"How can I help you?" asked Ted. "I believe in you. You are right."

"Go with me to the fort, and talk with him for me," said Braveheart.

"I will go," said Ted. "We will start in the morning."

The sun was coming up the next morning, when Ted and Braveheart rode out of the Moon Valley Ranch at the head of the roughriders. All the boys were going along, as they owed the officers at Fort Robinson a visit.

As they galloped along, they indulged in cowboy pranks, running races, jumping streams, chasing jack rabbits, and playing tricks on one another.

They camped at night on the White River, and early the next day arrived at Fort Robinson, and were warmly received by the officers, and quartered in an unoccupied officer's house facing the parade.

Ted and Braveheart, accompanied by the commandant of the post, visited old Swift Wing in his prison quarters. The chief was old and wrinkled, and could speak no English, but his seamed and wicked old face was very shrewd.

Watunga talked to him a long time, the old man nodded, but not replying. Then Colonel Newcomb, the commandant, spoke.

"Speak to him in behalf of the white settlers," said Braveheart to Ted; "I will interpret for you."

Ted made a long speech, in which he told the old chief that, as he was no longer with his people, he should step out of his office of chief, and let his son take his place, for the benefit of the Mandans, and the assurance of peace with the whites. He said that the white cattlemen desired it, and were disposed to be friendly with the Indians, and that the Indians could only lose by hostility. He praised Watunga, or Braveheart, for his courage and wisdom. His speech was so full of good common sense that the old chief was greatly impressed.

"Tell the white boy he has spoken well," said Swift Wing. "I will step down. My son Watunga shall take my place. He shall be chief. I am old, and can do nothing for my people while I sit here. I am of the old tribe that fought the palefaces, but I am too old to fight now. My young men have forsaken the tomahawk for the hoe. It is time for me to die. So I abdicate in favor of my clever son, who has learned the white man's ways, and while of Indian blood, has the white man's brains. Yet I should like to fight the bluecoats once more."

Into Swift Wing's face came such a look of savage cunning that Ted shuddered.

CHAPTER XVI.

A TREACHEROUS BULLET.

Ted was walking with Braveheart up to Colonel Newcomb's quarters after the interview with Swift Wing, when he saw Colonel Fothergill and Bossie dash into the parade ground. They had ridden over from the ranch, and were surrounded by the ladies of the post and the young officers, and escorted to the commandant's house.

Bossie was immediately taken possession of by a young lieutenant, with whom she was evidently a great favorite, but when she saw Ted she smiled at him, and he went over to her. He was introduced to the young officers, and was made one of the party, with the usual cordiality of an army post.

Lieutenant Greenough, who was lank and had a big brutal chin and small, deep-set eyes, was an exception, however. He paid particular attention to Bossie, and when he saw how cordially she greeted Ted he immediately began to snub and show dislike for the young roughrider. This did not bother Ted, however, who was soon engaged in a bantering conversation with the girl.

Lieutenant Greenough was just out of West Point. When he learned that Ted had been in the volunteer service, and had smelled powder, he became rancorously jealous and unpleasant. He believed that no one except a West Pointer had any business in the army, anyhow. Besides, he was very much in love with Bossie, and, incidentally, with her prospects, for he knew that her father was one of the richest cattlemen in the West.

When Bossie pointedly asked Ted to take her to the cavalry stables, there was a twinkle in her eye, almost a wink, in fact, and the lieutenant marched off scowling and muttering.

The colonel gave a ball that night, in Infantry Hall, in honor of the guests, and the young roughriders had a glorious time. Bossie was the belle of the ball, in her cowboy costume and jingling spurs, and she danced oftener with Ted than with Lieutenant Greenough.

The young roughriders, in their khaki uniforms, made a great hit, and their youth and buoyant spirits kept every one in high good humor.

Ted noticed that Braveheart, who did not dance, stood against the wall all evening watching Bossie Fothergill, with a deep glow in his big somber eyes. His gaze never seemed to leave her for a moment.

Colonel Newcomb had planned a sham battle for the next day for the entertainment of the guests, and the ball broke up comparatively early.

Ted and Braveheart, in walking to their quarters, were compelled to pass close to the guardhouse, in which Swift Wing, the old chief of the Mandans, was confined for the night.

The moon shone clear, and as they passed close to the building, Braveheart clutched Ted's arm and brought him to a halt, at the same time pointing to the guardhouse.

A man was standing close to the barred window of Swift Wing's cell.

Ted had to take only one glance at him to recognize Bazador.

Ted watched him for several minutes and saw something pass through the bars into his hands. Then Bazador crept away, mounted his horse and galloped off. Ted had sprung to intercept the half-breed, but Bazador was too quick for him.

"My father's message to the Mandans!" said Braveheart hoarsely.

Both were silent, as they continued their walk to their quarters. Braveheart felt ashamed of this exhibition of his father's apparent treachery. Ted was uneasy, because, knowing the desperate character of Bazador, he feared that something boding ill for the white people was being hatched up among the Indians.

Ted did not suspect Braveheart of any participation in the treacherous plans, and only felt sorry for him—sorry that he had been compelled to witness his father's duplicity.

They had passed the colonel's quarters. The post was as silent as the grave, except that they heard occasionally the stamp of horses' feet in the cavalry barns, or the thud of a sentry's rifle butt on the ground, as he stopped at the end of his beat to rest a moment.

Suddenly a woman's scream rang out, followed by a revolver shot.

They came from the colonel's house.

Ted and Braveheart turned and dashed in that direction. The sentries came running from all directions, and from all the houses along the officers' row scantily clad soldiers poured, some armed with their swords and some with pistols.

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE NEWS OF THE WORLD.

Big Room in School Building.

Public interest in the question of prolonging the school life of the American child has been stirred up in all parts of the country through the intensive drive toward that end now being conducted by the children's bureau, department of labor.

More than half the States have declared their intention to fight vigorously the too-early withdrawal of boys and girls from the public schools of the land. In many communities unusually large school building schedules have been arranged, and other measures have been taken to help the "back-to-the-school" movement and to provide for the comfort and health of the children while their education is being completed.

In New York City the largest school building program ever undertaken by the board of education is now under consideration. School buildings are urgently needed in the metropolis. In order to speed up construction a plan to let a general contract for such needed buildings to some big construction firm on a basis of cost plus a fixed percentage of profit is being discussed by the New York superintendent of schools, the city superintendent of buildings and representatives of a number of big construction firms.

The New York State education law and the New York City charter both require that contracts for construction of school buildings be awarded to the lowest bidder. No provision exists for any emergency exceptions. The city charter, however, permits the waiving of competitive bids when the board of aldermen approves. The fact that the builders guarantee the completion in eight months or a year of school buildings that it now takes from two to three years to finish, and that the cost will be more reasonable, is considered a strong argument in favor of this new "rush" plan of construction. The New York board of education has available for school buildings more than \$10,000,000. It has plans under way for construction work that will cost approximately \$4,000,000.

Further evidence of a nation-wide stimulation of interest in school questions is seen in recent steps taken by various communities to emphasize the importance of prolonged school training for our future citizens.

In Washington, D. C., the board of education, working in cooperation with the local "Children's Year" committee, child labor section, has requested the school authorities to throw open to this committee all lists of former pupils, with a view to approaching every child under 16 years of age who is not now in school.

Boy's Life Saved by Dog.

Don, a shepherd dog, belonging to Fritz Aureen of Douthat, Okla., saved his twelve-year-old son, Gustave, from a horrible death recently.

Gus, as he prefers to be called, had been sent by his mother to the grocery for some fresh meat for supper, and when darkness came and the lad had not returned she became alarmed. Summoning her hus-

band from a drill rig near by where he was working, the parents went to the grocery store to make inquiries concerning the missing boy.

They were told that he had purchased the meat and had left the store soon afterward. Neighbors then joined in a search for the boy, but no trace of him could be gained. While the search was on Mr. Aureen noticed that Don, their wonderfully intelligent dog, was acting strangely. He would come and bark and whine and then scamper away, always in the same direction.

Finally, when it was decided to follow the dog, the searchers came to a large drill hole from which came muffled moanings, undoubtedly made by a human being in great distress.

Matches were struck and upon peering into the hole Mr. Aureen discovered his son wedged in about fifteen feet from the surface and slowly sinking to a horrible death. A rope was finally lowered to the stricken boy, who after many painful attempts succeeded in fastening it about his body. At last he was brought to the surface unconscious and rushed to a doctor, as two of his ribs were broken and his flesh torn in many places.

He later explained that he had got the meat at the store and had taken a shorter way home than through the regular path. He stumbled and fell into the drill hole and cried for help until he was completely exhausted. The faithful Don, he said, had remained with him until he sank from the animal's sight and then had probably run home to summon help, which he finally accomplished, thus saving his little master from a fate too terrible to be thought of.

Oil Pipe Line Across Scotland.

The British government has just completed an eight-inch pipe line across Scotland. It is reported that the line was constructed for the purpose of securing a continuous and adequate supply of fuel oil for the British navy, with a minimum risk of interference from enemy submarines.

The line was constructed under the supervision of an American naval unit, consisting of experienced pipe-line men.

Police Round Up 128,000 "Jags" in Bootleg Whisky.

Hey! You worshipers at the shrine of Bacchus! Listen to this! It's enough to make a fella weep.

Figuring five drinks to a "jag"—which, according to the most authentic figures available, is too few for some and too many for others, but a happy medium withal—the police department bootlegging squad of Denver, Col., rounded up the makin's of 128,000 potential sprees during the year of our Lord, 1918.

One hundred and twenty-eight thousand—count 'em.

If you don't believe it, peruse the following figures, compiled by Detectives Blin and Schneider, who accomplished the "dirty work."

Since January 1st they have confiscated 5,000 gallons of contraband whisky. As bootleggers sell whisky,

there are sixteen drinks to a pint, thirty-two drinks to a quart, and 128 drinks to a gallon. Multiply 5,000, the number of gallons confiscated, by 128, the number of drinks in a gallon, and the answer is—640,000. Allowing five drinks to a "jag"—but what use to go further?

Doesn't the thought of it make you miserable?

"Some of the whisky we have in our vaults could more properly be labeled 'Dynamite,'" said Klein, "but most of it is regular stuff, the kind that is guaranteed to tickle your palate. Nearly all of it is bonded goods, ranging in age from four to twelve years."

At prevailing bootleg prices the whisky is worth \$200,000.

Wild Man Tried to Save His Beard.

Peter Bornato, wild man, squealed and squirmed while being shorn of shaggy locks and matted beard of ravenlike hue in Sandusky, Ohio. However, Sheriff C. Jay Perry, and two deputies held him while a barber plied shears and razor, and when the ordeal was over Bornato did not know himself.

"We're taking no chances on getting the cooties in this jail," said the sheriff.

Bornato, thinly and poorly clad, was brought to the jail by farmers living in the vicinity of Castalia, who, with their households, had become alarmed by his presence, after he had been captured in a wood at the end of a lively chase.

While Bornato seemed docile enough his appearance was terrifying.

Bornato refused to talk. In fact, the sheriff was uncertain as to the name by which he was booked, having decided that several wheezes, emitted when the stranger was questioned, sounded like Bornato more than anything else. So the booking was made accordingly.

The sheriff is of the opinion that the man escaped from some insane asylum, probably the Toledo State Hospital.

Changed Clothes in Snow.

Three girls making a complete change of clothing in the park during a snowstorm recently attracted the attention of Dan Spellman, park superintendent of Beloit, Kan.

Upon investigation he found they were girls from the industrial school. They had escaped the night before, walked to Solomon Rapids, a distance of twelve miles, broke open a trunk at the depot and walked back to Beloit in the fierce storm which raged all night. When found they were putting on the garments stolen from the trunk at Solomon Rapids. They were taken back to the school.

1918 Saw Greatest Timber Loss by Fire.

Disastrous fires occurring just at the close of the 1918 season made the forest loss in Oregon the greatest in its history, according to the report of State Forester Elliott, now in course of preparation. The loss is estimated at 1,107,743,000 feet damaged or destroyed, representing a monetary loss of \$734,692.25. Of this amount he estimates that 544,583,000 feet may be salvaged.

Up to September 26th the loss had been about the average, when fires occurred in Clatsop, Linn and

Tillamook Counties damaging or destroying 903,000,000 feet.

The fact that such immense resources are at the State's disposal is largely due to the farseeing action of the Legislature in years past in providing a forest code adequate for protection, the State forester says. He says that because of the labor shortage the last year losses were heavier than under normal conditions. High praise is given the activities of the loyal legion.

Industries of the Falkland Islands.

According to a representative of the Falkland Islands Company, who paid a friendly visit to the Punta Arenas consulate, there are now some 800,000 sheep on the islands, mostly of the Romney Marsh breed, with the average fleece weighing seven pounds. The death rate among the flocks is about twelve per cent, which is rather high and is caused by the great number of bogs in the islands. The 1917 production of wool and skins was taken by the British government at prices fifty-five per cent above those of 1914, f. o. b. Port Stanley. There is no freezing plant in the Falkland Islands, but some 65,000 sheep carcasses are canned, the product going to Great Britain.

Next to sheep farming the most important industry, and about the only other industry, is that of whaling, in which four British companies and one Argentine-British are engaged. These companies had a very prosperous season in 1917 and paid dividends of 100 to 150 per cent. The £50 shares of one company are now quoted at £358.

The islands have about 2,000 inhabitants, 650 of whom reside in Port Stanley. Steamer and mail services have been very poor for some time. There was an interval of four and one-half months between the arrivals of the last two steamers.

Boulder Marks Grave of Thirty-eight State Guard Men.

The thirty-ton boulder that is to mark the graves of thirty-eight members of the First Provisional Regiment, N. Y. G., who gave their lives while guarding New York City's aqueducts during the war, completed its perilous journey to the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery recently.

Movement of the big stone from its original resting place in the cliffs in the Adirondacks was an engineering feat in itself. Officials of the New York Central Railroad undertook to accomplish it as their contribution to the memorial.

A bronze tablet bearing the names of the thirty-eight will be attached to the boulder.

Marooned in Bay Two Days Without Food.

Two men, who had drifted helplessly in a twenty-four-foot motor launch off Staten Island one morning recently at ten o'clock, went ashore on a sand bar off Great Kills, S. I., and were picked up by a passing vessel at nine o'clock two days later. They had gone without food for two days and were wet and chilled by the fog and the cold gale.

The men are Fred Hofsis, an engineer, and James Perry, a naval electrician, who left Swinburne Island Hospital for South Beach to bring a nurse across to the hospital. They lost their bearings in the fog and

soon their engine went dead. They drifted without sense of direction during the night, always fearing that in the dark a larger boat would sink their little craft.

Naval and harbor authorities hunted the bay for them, but met with no success because of the fog. It was feared the launch had been washed to sea, and hope was lost.

The boat was washed on a sand bar off Great Kills at six o'clock at night, and there the men remained for fifteen hours till rescued.

His Lateness Saved Wife.

Here is the case of a man who stayed out late playing cards and came home to save the life of his wife. He deserves credit.

His name is Lee Wah and his wife is Sing Ah, and they live in San Francisco, Cal. She got tired of waiting for Lee and went to bed in disgust. She forgot to turn off the gas completely, so that she was unconscious from the fumes when he returned. He was loser up to that time.

Lee struck a match when he came in. There was a bang and a lot of fireworks on account of the accumulation of gas.

Lee Wah landed out in the hallway on his shoulder blades. The bed his wife was sleeping in was tipped over. A window was blown out and the plaster was jarred from the wall.

When it was all over the police and the fire department came. The wife was taken to the hospital, where she was revived. Lee Wah recovered before that. The couple were reconciled when each of them had heard of the circumstances.

Triphammer Used for Spy Wireless.

An interesting story of enemy spy work is told by Frank H. Gaskill, of Philadelphia, Pa., assistant chief of the protective league. The organization caught a man spelling out dangerous messages with a triphammer he was operating in a big industrial plant on the Delaware River.

The messages were first detected by a telegraph operator in Palmyra, N. J., who heard:

"Troopship moving to-morrow morning."

He notified the authorities, who heard this message:

"Raid on fishing fleet complete surprise."

The hammer expert was found to be a former telegraph operator. Mr. Gaskill said the mystery of where the operator got his news or to whom he was signaling was never solved.

Development of Black Fox Industry.

The number of foxes in the ranches of Prince Edward Island at the beginning of the pelting season in 1917 was approximately 10,000. From December 1, 1917 to January 31, 1918, 2,500 foxes were killed and their skins marketed. Raising ranch-bred foxes is an industry that is being carried on extensively in all the Canadian provinces, in at least a dozen of the northernmost of the United States, and beginning in Japan and Norway, all lying in much the same climatic belt, adapted to domesticating the black fox under the most favorable conditions.

Rat-killing Contest.

Hundreds of intensely interested spectators of Omaha, Neb., crowded the horse sale pavilion of the Union Stock Yards on the South Side to witness a rat-killing contest, an absolutely new indoor sport in Omaha.

In the first event twenty big husky rats, the kind that infest the stock yards, were turned into a pit. An English coachdog, belonging to Cal Henderson, one of the employees of the yards, was turned into the pit with the rodents, and in the short time of nine minutes and fifteen seconds succeeded in dispatching them all.

A Fake Pistol to Scare Thieves.

A new electric flash-light pistol of French invention for scaring criminals not only displays a bright light when the trigger is pulled, but also makes a noise like a real weapon as well.

Under-water Magnet Aids Salvage.

A means of making use of the electric magnet under water has been devised in Japan and it promises to be of great assistance in locating sunken vessels, to recover which salvage operations on a big scale are expected.

Sailors Are Treated Like Men.

The deep-sea sailors, oppressed for years, handled roughly, hard worked, battered by vicissitudes, a suitable subject for sickly sentiment and wholesome sympathy, has at last come into his own.

It used to be that a sailor on a sailing vessel got fifteen dollars a month, had to buy his clothes out of that, got the worst food, had the rudest kind of a bunk for a bed, and was ordered to work at all hours of the day or night.

And now, as an example, take the crew of the Belgian schooner *Ady*, lately at the port of Honolulu, Hawaii. The sailors get seventy-five dollars a month, beds with coverlets on them, food of the best kind, a waiter to look after their wants, and napkins—yes, actually napkins—on the table. Are they pleased with that? Not on your life.

The crew of the "*Ady*" petitioned the captain for mosquito nets for their beds. Yes, sir—sailors asking for mosquito nets for their beds. The old order of things has changed, quoth the ancient salts along the Honolulu water front.

They Measured Him for Coffin in Sixties.

Page J. Smith, for years president of a jewelry company, in Cumberland, Md., is dead at the age of eighty years. He was born in Montpelier, Vt., and went to Cumberland during the Civil War. It was here that he met Miss Sarah Dorothy Ways, a girl whose volunteer duty it was to see to the care and feeding of the Union soldiers in hospitals at this point. Miss Ways afterward became Mrs. Smith.

It was also in the old church hospital of Cumberland during the Civil War that he was measured for a coffin, to be buried the next morning. His illness at that time was of such a nature that for a time he was lying as in a trance, and he was in this condition when an officer, making the rounds with the under-

taker, had him measured for a coffin and ordered that he be taken out for burial next morning.

Mr. Smith, however, rallied from his illness, became quite well, and at the close of the war decided to make Cumberland his home, where he has lived for over fifty years after being measured for his coffin.

Gave Watch to War Hero.

As a token of appreciation for his services in the World War, Walter McDaniel, who was severely wounded during the fighting in France, and who is now at his home in Charlottesville, Ind., on a furlough from the Walter Reed Hospital at Washington, received a forty-five-dollar gold watch, the purchase price being made up by citizens of Charlottesville.

McDaniel, who lost his right leg as the result of shrapnel wounds, is walking an hour each day with the aid of an artificial limb. He expects to be discharged from the hospital within the next few weeks.

Cow Sets New World Record.

Tilly Alcarta, registered Holstein cow, owned in Woodland, Cal., was found to have made a new world's record for milk production when results of one year's official test were compiled. Tilly's production was 33,424.8 pounds. She takes the honors from a Washington Holstein, Lutske Vale Cornucopia, of Chimacuo, which made a record of 31,246.9 pounds two years ago.

The test was conducted under supervision of the University of California College of Agriculture.

Dog Runs Off with Traveler's Gipsack.

When Abner Ketchum, of Conklin, N. Y., went to the depot to take a train for Hoboken, he purchased a ticket, stepped outside of the building to wait for the train, placed his traveling bag on the ground, and lighted a fresh cigar. A moment later when he heard the whistle of the approaching train, he reached for his bag. It was gone.

Upon looking around he saw a large dog making off with a grip in its mouth, and it looked very much like his property. He started after the dog, but Fido, seeing that he was being pursued, ran all the faster. After a chase of nearly a half mile the dog dropped the bag and scooted down a side street.

Government Fair to Women.

Federal policy in the employment of women during the war, as revealed in the work of the national war labor board, is outlined in the "Monthly Labor Review," which says:

"In the many awards made by the board affecting women, it has not generally been necessary to make any special provision for them beyond the application of the board's principles to the specific case. Women have shared with men in the increase in wages which the board has granted. Very frequently they have received a greater proportionate increase than the men, because the prevailing rate of wages for women has been lower. In certain cases it was necessary to specify that there must be no discrimination against women, but in general it has been sufficient to lay down in general terms the equal pay principle.

"In several of the awards special minimum wage

provisions have been inserted in respect to women, setting their minimum lower than that of the men. This was done partly to avoid too great a disturbance within the industry, and partly because the women referred to were doing a lower grade of work than any of the men. The minima set, however, were generous and well in advance of the wages of men in many an industry which has not yet come under the jurisdiction of the board."

Cat Gives Fire Alarm.

The story-and-a-half dwelling house owned and occupied by Clarence Tibbetts, at Madison, Wis., was badly damaged by fire on a recent morning. Mr. Tibbetts, who lives alone, was awakened by his cat jumping on the bed, and a moment later some plastering fell. The fire had gained considerable headway before the alarm was sounded. A few articles of furniture and a barn containing an automobile were also saved.

Places Professional Women.

Of the thirteen bureaus of occupations in the United States which have been established by organizations of college and professional women, eight have come into the United States employment service, department of labor, since May, 1918. These are operated as professional sections of local employment offices and are situated in Cleveland, Detroit, Denver, Kansas City, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh. There are also professional sections in St. Louis and Washington, D. C.

In Washington, D. C., the professional section is placing many men and women who have been doing war work. At the offices in the old Gordon Hotel persons representing scientific, artistic, and special lines of training have registered in large numbers, and they have been placed rapidly since the signing of the armistice.

A conference of the national committee of bureaus of occupations for trained women was held in Boston, which Doctor Elizabeth Kemper Adams attended in the double capacity of representative of the national committee of bureaus of occupations, as well as a representative of the department of labor. She then reported on the plans and policies for professional workers projected by the United States employment service, and later in an address before various important organizations in Boston outlined the aims of the department of labor, emphasizing the importance of understanding and supporting them through the period of reconstruction. Later she addressed the students of Wellesley College and the New Hampshire branch of the National Civic Federation.

Help to Build Homes.

Coöperation by building and loan associations on a national scale has been proposed to the division of public works of the department of labor as a means of aiding home building during the next few years.

The retarded building development during the war has left a somewhat serious condition of congestion in many large cities, and almost everywhere the amount of housing is below normal. On the other hand, many workingmen who have been working overtime during the war and who have saved their money

believe that this is a propitious time to put some of their savings into a home.

The building and loan associations, it is pointed out, can function in behalf of the home builder much as the farm-loan banks aid the agriculturist. Certain difficulties are in the way of a national organization of this work, but it is believed that these can all be surmounted.

Dog Saves Master from Hungry Lions.

How an Airdale dog saved the life of its master by bringing him cartridges for his empty rifle just as two hungry mountain lions were preparing to spring at him, is told by Stephen T. Mather, director of national parks, of San Francisco, Cal., on his return from Yosemite Valley.

The hunter was J. S. Bruce, who has just been appointed official lion killer by the California fish and game commission.

Bruce's wife had removed the cartridges for the safety of their child, and, not knowing this, Bruce went hunting, leaving a note to his wife to send the dog after him.

Mrs. Bruce tied a box of cartridges around the dog's neck, and the dog arrived after Bruce had twice pulled the trigger of his empty gun at two lions who crouched on the limb of a tree. Hastily loading his gun, he brought the animals down.

Training Rooms Pay.

Factory training school costs are figured uniformly, according to a plan worked out by the training service, department of labor, so that the actual expenses of fitting workers for better jobs or more complicated mechanical processes may be determined accurately. This plan, as followed out by reports from the factories where training is under way, show that ninety per cent of such departments more than pay their own way, and the factory owners declare that the training rooms that are carried at a loss nevertheless represent real assets.

The costs reports, as based on the recommendations of the training service, show how many persons are being trained, how many hours are spent in training, and the total wage. The cost of instruction, plus the wages, is then compared with the total production credit, to show the net cost of training and the net cost for each person's equipment.

Indirect expenses of the training department, including administrative expense, clerical and accounting costs, timekeeping, dispatching, trucking, janitor service, and office expense are also computed in the total cost of training.

Seagulls Stranded in Oil.

Thousands of dead seagulls soaked with fuel oil strew the waters of Lynn Canal near the wreck of the steamship "Princess Sophia," according to steamship captains arriving at Seattle, Wash.

When the "Princess Sophia" was swept on the rocks of Vanderbilt Reef her fuel oil tanks burst, releasing the oil, which soon covered the water for a great distance. The gulls alighting in the water were instantly made helpless and soon starved to death.

Women Will Work Eight Thousand Farms.

Some of the eight thousand abandoned farms in the State of New York are going to be reclaimed by the woman's land army, and some of the farmerettes who are to help in this back to the crop raising movement, together with the women who lead in the agricultural revolution, will meet Tuesday and Wednesday of this week at the Astor Hotel to discuss problems, policies and programs.

One of the most important features of the girls' back to the soil movement will be arranging to make the farm so attractive that it will keep all hands on the job and to provide special entertainment designed to popularize the former much despised outdoor labor.

Mrs. Otto R. Eichel, executive State director of the woman's land army, who will preside at the convention, said yesterday: "The real future of the land army beyond the first necessity of helping gather twenty million tons of food for Europe is, I believe, the placing of women on farms in order to reclaim the good, tillable land of our State, which is wasted because of lack of cultivation.

"There are eight thousand abandoned farms in New York State. Young men and women have left these farms to go to the cities. They have not been able to stand the isolation and the long winter nights in a lonely farmhouse. They have left the farms because they lacked companionship and interest. The land army is putting young persons back on these same farms. Through its unit system it has provided amusement for girls and is giving them a new interest in living in the country.

"Last year the land army helped cultivate estates and farms that were being harvested for the usual crops. This year we are going to extend our activities by helping the State to reclaim its abandoned farms. Young, strong women can work on these deserted farms and make them yield big harvests. It is a question of keeping them interested and happy at their work rather than anything else. Girls living in the city can take vacations by going out to land army camps. For many years farmers have tried to keep labor on the farms and have failed. They failed because they could not make the farms attractive enough to hold the workers. We are going to look after this feature of farm life."

About the forthcoming convention Mrs. Eichel said: "I predict that it will be the most democratic convention this city has ever seen. Those units with their service stripes for three months in the field are made up of girls who have worked together and played together and made pickles together. Girls of society and girls of the tenement districts will gather to give their reports and enlist for the next planting and harvesting time.

"What does it matter where you live or who you are? If you made good at farm work and are booked for another season, that's the only thing that counts. The woman's land army in this State forgot all about who a girl was in order that the greatest amount of work might be achieved during the war emergency. It has proved too fine a thing to let go in times of peace."

The convention promises to be one of the most picturesque gatherings of girls. Among the farmer-

ettes will be artists, school-teachers, factory workers, milliners, stenographers—girls representing almost every profession and trade. They will appear in their working clothes, blue smocks, knickerbockers, high field boots and great big straw hats. Miss Eleanor Coward will have charge of credentials and committees headed by farmerettes as well as ushers will be land service girls.

American Squadron Put Down 56,570 Mines in North Sea.

The American mining squadron which in conjunction with the British navy blazed a two-hundred-and-thirty-mile trail of mines across the North Sea, from the Orkneys to the coast of Norway, returned home with the story of how this great achievement in the campaign to throttle the German submarines was contributed.

Captain Reginald R. Belknap, commander of this fleet of ten ships—two light cruisers and eight converted merchant craft—described in a statement recently made at Washington, D. C., the work of laying the 70,100 mines which made up the so-called North Sea barrage and announced that at least seventeen enemy submersibles were known to have come to grief in attempting to pass through this field.

The American ships laid 56,570 of the total number of these American invented and manufactured engines of destruction. The field averaged twenty-five miles in width and nowhere was it less than fifteen miles across, an hour's run for a submarine. If a safe course were sought underneath several lines of mines would be found there equally deep, and if the submarines went down even deeper mines were ready for them there, too, and one touch was enough.

"Before the barrier was halfway across," said Captain Belknap, "the barrage began to yield results. Early in July, 1918, after the second excursion of the mine layers, reports would come of submarines damaged or disappearing in that area. It may never be known definitely how many actually did come to grief there, but the best information gives probably ten before the middle of October, with a final total of seventeen or more. In addition to this toll the squadron should be credited with two submarines lost in the fields of the British mines laid by the 'Baltimore' off the Irish coast."

The American squadron arrived at Inverness last May 26th, ready to begin operations, and twelve days later started on its first mine planting excursion. On these trips, which lasted from forty to eighty hours, the squadron was part of the British Grand fleet, and for protection against submarines and raiding cruisers it was accompanied by British destroyers and battleships or battle cruisers.

"On the second mining excursion," said Captain Belknap, "the sixth battle squadron was the support, consisting of four American battleships, commanded by Rear Admiral Hugh Rodman, of the United States navy, in the flagship 'New York.' One may imagine with what feelings we saw our own ships file out of Scapa Flow, form line and slowly disappear in the haze as they swept off to the southeastward. It will be readily understood that the way had to be made

smooth for the mine planters. A single well-torpedo or mine, or a few enemy shells, would certainly finish one vessel, and probably destroy of them. Each mine planter carried from two to 120 tons of high explosives, a total of nearly 1,000 tons in the squadron, many times more than the amount that devastated Halifax.

"The operation as a whole was done in conjunction with a British mine-laying squadron of four ships which worked from a base at Grangemouth, under command of Rear Admiral C. Baker, of the royal navy. The American and British mine squadrons often went out at the same time under the protection of the same heavy squadron except on two occasions they always worked separately, in different parts of the barrage area."

"Altogether the American squadron made five excursions, the British squadron eleven, and the work was finished at the end of October. On the last excursion the squadron planted a mine field five miles long, containing 3,400 mines, in three hours and thirty-six minutes. Everything went without a hitch. The new mine installations worked perfectly. In the first operation one ship emptied herself of 67 mines without a single break, one mine every eleven one-half seconds through more than two hours of the longest series ever planted anywhere.

"Not only that, the casualties were very few. Only one man fell overboard at sea from the 'Saranac,' there were four deaths among the 4,000 men in the fleet, might have occurred under any condition. There was no other loss of life nor other injury and the close navigation, near mine fields, no ship came to grief, thanks largely to Captain Butler, Navigator Cunningham, of the flagship 'San Francisco.'"

The flagship "San Francisco" was commanded by Captain H. V. Butler, and her consort, the "Baltimore," by Captain A. W. Marshall. Four merchant vessels used in the fleet were formerly German liners, carrying freight between New York and Galveston, now the "Roanoke," Captain C. D. Stetson; the "Canonicus," Captain T. L. Johnson; the "Tonic," Captain J. W. Greenslade, and the "Quinn," Commander W. H. Reynolds. Two were Old Dominion passenger liners, the "Jefferson," now named the "Quinnebaug," Commanded by Pratt Mannix, and the "Saranac," Captain S. Gannon. The remaining two were the fast "Massachusetts" and the "Bunker Hill," of the Eastern Shipbuilding Corporation, renamed the "Shawmut," Captain W. T. Cluverius, and the "Aroostook," Captain J. Vevey Tomb. Each ship carried about twenty officers and four hundred men and was armed only lightly for defense against submarines and aircraft.

Dog Attacks Air Plane.

A bulldog seized the propeller of one of a fleet of five air planes from Fort Sill, Okla., just as they were leaving. The machine was wrecked and the dog killed. The fleet had to delay their trip back to the fort until a new blade had been installed.

vel
woi
oy
ver
ne:
th

onj
ar
th
nd
m
dr
ce

ne
rd.
s.
lire

7
y
o

ta
n

ic

r
5

or

te

re

ce

n

d

d

si

B

M

S

a

W

T

e

e

New Buffalo Bill Weekly

ISSUED
EVERY
TUESDAY

BEAUTIFUL
COLORED
COVERS

There is no need of our telling American readers how interesting the stories of the adventures of Buffalo Bill, as scout and plainsman, really are. These stories have been read exclusively in this weekly for many years, and are voted to be masterpieces of Western adventure fiction.

Buffalo Bill is more popular to-day than he ever was, and, consequently, everybody ought to know all there is to know about him. In no manner can you become so thoroughly acquainted with the actual habits and life of this great man, as by reading the **New Buffalo Bill Weekly**.

We give herewith a list of some of the back numbers in print. You can have your news dealer order them or they will be sent direct by the publishers to any address upon receipt of the price in money or postage stamps.

- 140—Buffalo Bill's Ordeal of Fire.
- 141—Buffalo Bill Among the Man-eaters.
- 142—Buffalo Bill's Casket of Pearls.
- 143—Buffalo Bill's Sky Pilot.
- 144—Buffalo Bill's Totem.
- 145—Buffalo Bill's Flatboat Drift.
- 146—Buffalo Bill on Deck.
- 147—Buffalo Bill and the Bronchobuster.
- 148—Buffalo Bill's Great Round-up.
- 149—Buffalo Bill's Pledge.
- 150—Buffalo Bill's Cowboy Pard.
- 151—Buffalo Bill and the Emigrants.
- 152—Buffalo Bill Among the Pueblos.
- 153—Buffalo Bill's Four-footed Pards.
- 154—Buffalo Bill's Protégé.
- 155—Buffalo Bill Ensnared.
- 156—Buffalo Bill's Pick-up.
- 157—Buffalo Bill's Quest.
- 158—Buffalo Bill's Waif of the Plains.
- 159—Buffalo Bill Baffled.
- 160—Buffalo Bill Among the Mormons.
- 161—Buffalo Bill's Assistance.
- 162—Buffalo Bill's Rattlesnake Trail.
- 163—Buffalo Bill and the Slave Dealer.
- 164—Buffalo Bill's Strong Arm.
- 165—Buffalo Bill's Girl Pard.
- 166—Buffalo Bill's Iron Bracelets.
- 167—Buffalo Bill's "Paper Talk."
- 168—Buffalo Bill's Bridge of Fire.
- 169—Buffalo Bill's Bowle.
- 170—Buffalo Bill and the Forty Thieves.
- 171—Buffalo Bill's Mine.
- 172—Buffalo Bill's Clean-up.
- 173—Buffalo Bill's Ruse.
- 174—Buffalo Bill Overboard.
- 175—Buffalo Bill's Ring.
- 176—Buffalo Bill's Big Contract.
- 177—Buffalo Bill and Calamity Jane.
- 178—Buffalo Bill's Kid Pard.
- 179—Buffalo Bill's Desperate Plight.
- 180—Buffalo Bill's Fearless Stand.
- 181—Buffalo Bill and the Yelping Crew.
- 182—Buffalo Bill's Guiding Hand.
- 183—Buffalo Bill's Queer Quest.
- 184—Buffalo Bill's Prize "Get-away."
- 185—Buffalo Bill's Hurricane Hustle.
- 186—Buffalo Bill's Star Play.
- 187—Buffalo Bill's Bluff.
- 188—Buffalo Bill's Trackers.
- 189—Buffalo Bill's Dutch Pard.
- 190—Buffalo Bill and the Bravo.
- 191—Buffalo Bill and the Quaker.
- 192—Buffalo Bill's Package of Death.
- 193—Buffalo Bill's Treasure Cache.
- 194—Buffalo Bill's Private War.
- 195—Buffalo Bill and the Trouble-hunter.
- 196—Buffalo Bill and the Rope Wizard.
- 197—Buffalo Bill's Fiesta.
- 198—Buffalo Bill Among the Cheyennes.
- 199—Buffalo Bill Besieged.
- 200—Buffalo Bill and the Red Hand.
- 201—Buffalo Bill's Tree-Trunk Drift.
- 202—Buffalo Bill and the Specter.
- 203—Buffalo Bill's Secret Message.
- 204—Buffalo Bill and the Horde of Her-mosa.
- 205—Buffalo Bill's Lonesome Trail.
- 206—Buffalo Bill's Quarry.
- 207—Buffalo Bill in Deadwood.
- 208—Buffalo Bill's First Aid.
- 209—Buffalo Bill and Old Moonlight.
- 210—Buffalo Bill Repaid.
- 211—Buffalo Bill's Throwback.
- 212—Buffalo Bill's "Sight-Unseen."
- 213—Buffalo Bill's New Pard.
- 214—Buffalo Bill's Winged Victory.

- 215—Buffalo Bill's "Pieces-of-Eight."
- 216—Buffalo Bill and the Eight Vaqueros.
- 217—Buffalo Bill's Unlucky Siesta.
- 218—Buffalo Bill's Apache Clue.
- 219—Buffalo Bill and the Apache Totem.
- 220—Buffalo Bill's Golden Wonder.
- 221—Buffalo Bill's Fiesta Night.
- 222—Buffalo Bill and the Hatchet Boys.
- 223—Buffalo Bill and the Mining Shark.
- 224—Buffalo Bill and the Cattle Barons.
- 225—Buffalo Bill's Long Odds.
- 226—Buffalo Bill, the Peace Maker.
- 227—Buffalo Bill's Promise to Pay.
- 228—Buffalo Bill's Diamond Hitch.
- 229—Buffalo Bill and the Wheel of Fate.
- 230—Buffalo Bill and the Pool of Mystery.
- 231—Buffalo Bill and the Deserter.
- 232—Buffalo Bill's Island in the Air.
- 233—Buffalo Bill, Town Marshal.
- 234—Buffalo Bill's Ultimatum.
- 235—Buffalo Bill's Test.
- 236—Buffalo Bill and the Ponca Raiders.
- 237—Buffalo Bill's Boldest Stroke.
- 238—Buffalo Bill's Enigma.
- 239—Buffalo Bill's Blockade.
- 240—Buffalo Bill and the Gilded Clique.
- 241—Buffalo Bill and Perdita Reyes.
- 242—Buffalo Bill and the Boomers.
- 243—Buffalo Bill Calls a Halt.
- 244—Buffalo Bill and the Ke-Week Totem.
- 245—Buffalo Bill's O. K.
- 246—Buffalo Bill at Cañon Diablo.
- 247—Buffalo Bill's Transfer.
- 248—Buffalo Bill and the Red Horse Hunters.
- 249—Buffalo Bill's Dangerous Duty.
- 250—Buffalo Bill and the Chief's Daughter.
- 251—Buffalo Bill at Tinaja Wells.
- 252—Buffalo Bill and the Men of Mendon.
- 253—Buffalo Bill at Rainbow's End.
- 254—Buffalo Bill and the Russian Plot.
- 255—Buffalo Bill's Red Triangle.
- 256—Buffalo Bill's Royal Flush.
- 257—Buffalo Bill's Tramp Pard.
- 258—Buffalo Bill on the Upper Missouri.
- 259—Buffalo Bill's Crow Scout.
- 260—Buffalo Bill's Opium Case.
- 261—Buffalo Bill's Witchcraft.
- 262—Buffalo Bill's Mountain Foes.
- 263—Buffalo Bill's Battle Cry.
- 264—Buffalo Bill's Fight for the Right.
- 265—Buffalo Bill's Barbecue.
- 266—Buffalo Bill and the Red Renegade.
- 267—Buffalo Bill and the Apache Kid.
- 268—Buffalo Bill at the Copper Barriers.
- 269—Buffalo Bill's Power.
- 270—Buffalo Bill and the Chief Hawkchee.
- 271—Buffalo Bill and the Indian Girl.
- 272—Buffalo Bill Across the Rio Grande.
- 273—Buffalo Bill and the Headless Horse-man.
- 274—Buffalo Bill's Clean Sweep.
- 275—Buffalo Bill's Handful of Pearls.
- 276—Buffalo Bill's Pueblo Foes.
- 277—Buffalo Bill's Taos Totem.
- 278—Buffalo Bill and the Pawnee Prophet.
- 279—Buffalo Bill and Old Wanderoo.
- 280—Buffalo Bill's Merry War.
- 281—Buffalo Bill and Grizzly Dan.
- 282—Buffalo Bill at Lone Tree Gap.
- 283—Buffalo Bill on the Trail of Death.
- 284—Buffalo Bill at Cimarron Bar.
- 285—Buffalo Bill and the Sluice Robber.
- 286—Buffalo Bill on Lost River.
- 287—Buffalo Bill's Thunderbolt.
- 288—Buffalo Bill's Sioux Circus.

- 289—Buffalo Bill's Sioux Tackle.
- 290—Buffalo Bill and the Talking Statue.
- 291—Buffalo Bill's Medicine Trail.
- 292—Buffalo Bill and the Knife Wizard.
- 293—Buffalo Bill and the Red Bedouin.
- 294—Buffalo Bill and the Prairie Corsairs.
- 295—Buffalo Bill's Scarlet Pick-up.
- 296—Buffalo Bill's Mental Magic.
- 297—Buffalo Bill and the Lost Indian.
- 298—Buffalo Bill's Conquest.
- 299—Buffalo Bill's Waif of the West.
- 300—Buffalo Bill's Juggle with Fate.
- 301—Buffalo Bill and the Basilisk.
- 302—Buffalo Bill and the Klan of Kan.
- 303—Buffalo Bill and the Sorceress.
- 304—Buffalo Bill in the Ute Outbreak.
- 305—Buffalo Bill and the Border Belle.
- 306—Buffalo Bill's Lost Trail.
- 307—Buffalo Bill's Clever Capture.
- 308—Buffalo Bill and the White Chief.
- 309—Buffalo Bill and the Gambler.
- 310—Buffalo Bill and the Black Parson.
- 311—Buffalo Bill and the Toll-Takers.
- 312—Buffalo Bill and the Blue Masks.
- 313—Buffalo Bill and the Valley Terrors.
- 314—Buffalo Bill and the Ranchero King.
- 315—Buffalo Bill and the Affair of Honor.
- 316—Buffalo Bill and the Ranger Robbers.
- 317—Buffalo Bill's Blizzard Pards.
- 318—Buffalo Bill's Indian Allies.
- 319—Buffalo Bill Snowbound.
- 320—Buffalo Bill's Chivalry.

- Dated November 2d, 1918.
- 321—Buffalo Bill on the Mexican Border.
- Dated November 9th, 1918.
- 322—Buffalo Bill and the Conspirator Cap-tain.
- Dated November 16th, 1918.
- 323—Buffalo Bill and the Mysterious Ranchero.
- Dated November 23d, 1918.
- 324—Buffalo Bill on the Salt Lake Trail.
- Dated November 30th, 1918.
- 325—Buffalo Bill and the Overland Out-laws.
- Dated December 7th, 1918.
- 326—Buffalo Bill and the Boy Regulators.
- Dated December 14th, 1918.
- 327—Buffalo Bill and the Red Buzzards.
- Dated December 21st, 1918.
- 328—Buffalo Bill and the Red Butterfly.
- Dated December 28th, 1918.
- 329—Buffalo Bill and the Valley Vigilantes.
- Dated January 4th, 1919.
- 330—Buffalo Bill and the Silk Lasso.
- Dated January 11th, 1919.
- 331—Buffalo Bill and the Gold Boomers.
- Dated January 18th, 1919.
- 332—Buffalo Bill in the Lost Valley.
- Dated January 25th, 1919.
- 333—Buffalo Bill and the Apache Dwarfs.
- Dated February 1st, 1919.
- 334—Buffalo Bill and the Red Rattlers.
- Dated February 8th, 1919.
- 335—Buffalo Bill's Outlaw Allies.
- Dated February 15th, 1919.
- 336—Buffalo Bill's Queer Pard.
- Dated February 22d, 1919.
- 337—Buffalo Bill's Strange Prisoner.
- Dated March 1st, 1919.
- 338—Buffalo Bill's Daring Drover.
- Dated March 8th, 1919.
- 339—Buffalo Bill's Young Traller.
- Dated March 15th, 1919.
- 340—Buffalo Bill and the War Hawk.

PRICE, SIX CENTS PER COPY. If you want any back numbers of our weeklies and cannot procure them from your news dealer, they can be obtained direct from this office. Postage stamps taken the same as money.

STREET & SMITH CORPORATION, Publishers, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York City